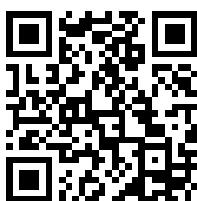


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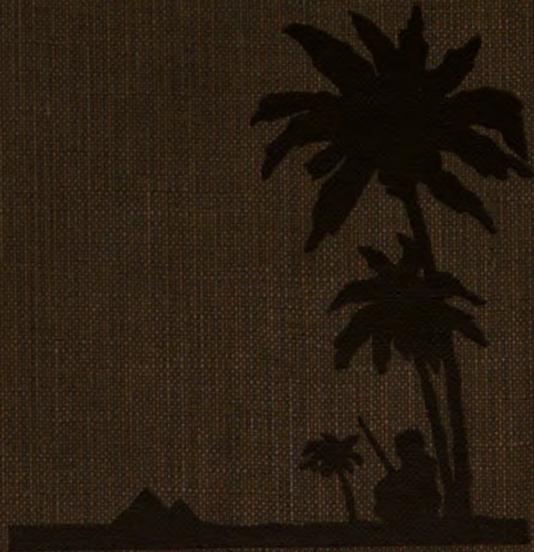
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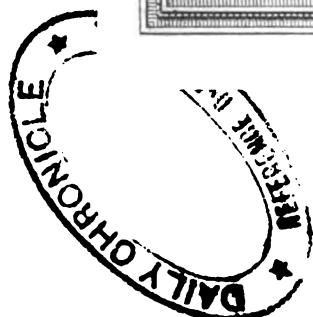
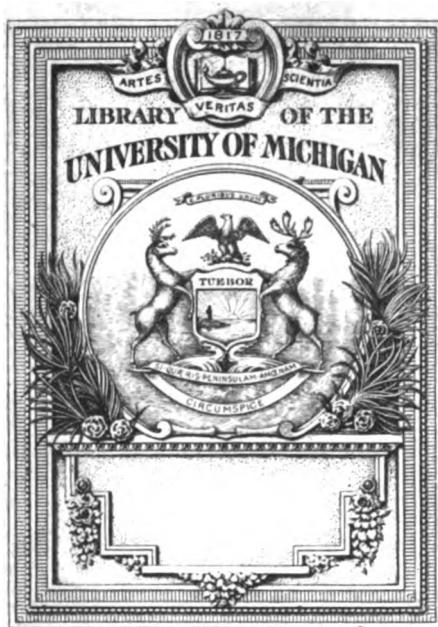
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# ROMFORD TO BEIRUT





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**ROMFORD  
TO BEIRUT**







LIEUT.-COLONEL R. M. LAURIE, D.S.O., T.D., D.L.  
COMMANDED 271ST BRIGADE R.F.A., THROUGHOUT THE WAR  
HONORARY COLONEL, 85TH (EAST ANGLIAN) FIELD BRIGADE, R.A. (T.A.)  
—THE RECONSTITUTED BRIGADE

# ROMFORD TO BEIRUT VIA FRANCE, EGYPT AND JERICHO

---

AN OUTLINE OF THE WAR RECORD OF  
“B” Battery, 271st Brigade, R.F.A.  
(1/2nd ESSEX BATTERY, R.F.A.)  
WITH MANY DIGRESSIONS

COMPILED IN NARRATIVE FORM  
BY  
EDWIN BLACKWELL  
AND EDWIN C. AXE  
FROM DIARIES, ETC.

*Illustrations by GORDON JACKSON*

10/- net

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*Published by R. W. HUMPHRIS*  
“HOMELIGH,” ALBERT ROAD, SOUTHCLIFF, CLACTON-ON-SEA  
*on behalf of the Old “B” Battery, 271st Brigade, R.F.A.*  
1926

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## “ UBIQUE ”

**THERE** is a word you often see, pronounce it  
as you may—

‘ You bike,’ ‘ you bykwe,’ ‘ ubbikwe’—alludin’  
to R.A.

It serves ‘Orse, Field, an’ Garrison as motto for  
a crest,

An’ when you’ve found out all it means, I’ll tell  
you ’alf the rest.

**RUDYARD KIPLING.**



L. 1111  
J. 1111  
11-14-29  
28334

## PREFACE

A NEW generation has arisen since, ten years ago, we took the guns out of Romford on our 5000 mile trek. It is a far cry to Beirut in Syria, where we heard the "Cease Fire" some four years later, and in the difficult period following the war many of the members of the 2nd Essex Battery have become scattered over the country and in distant lands. The spirit of comradeship, born of hardships shared together in France, Egypt and Palestine, still lives ; the conditions of the bivouac, with blazing wood fire at the end of a hard day in the saddle or with the guns, would soon reanimate that spirit to all its glowing strength. Wherever old comrades forgather, it is inevitable that, sooner or later, they will commence to fight their battles over again—anecdote will follow anecdote until far into the night.

It was in consequence of this natural inclination that we first conceived the idea of collecting material in order to piece together a permanent and concise record of the Battery's history during the war. We appreciated neither the difficulty nor the magnitude of the undertaking. Assembling miscellaneous diary extracts, together with a few random reflections, into a readable narrative did not seem too ambitious, but mere welding developed into a work which has taxed our literary capacity to the utmost. We desired to amplify the diary entries, to intersperse banal incident in a piquant manner, to sketch briefly the historical associations of the many spots visited, to give impressions, to create "atmosphere." In short, we wished to make the prosaic interesting.

28334-11-14-29

Whether we have succeeded in these endeavours we must leave to the judgment of our readers. In making the attempt we have doubtless often rambled from the point ; the humour introduced in a variety of sidelights may be extraneous in some instances, whilst the style probably presents many deficiencies. Nevertheless, we feel satisfied that we have achieved our main object in placing on record in narrative form as true an account of the Battery as could be gleaned from the sources available. Its career, treated in detail, would afford sufficient material for a comprehensive work, but this account aims only at sketching in the outline of its war service, leaving to the recollection of late members the filling in of incident according to their own experience. To every date and incident recorded there hangs a tale, and if our selection of the salient points does but start trains of thought, we think our aims will be substantially attained. On the other hand, there has been introduced a sprinkling of general matter which will heighten interest to the casual reader.

We have been guided a great deal by the Brigade Diary, which reposes among Army Records and is a model of crystallisation. This was supplemented by very useful diary notes furnished by Driver H. G. Adey, Bombardier B. G. Payton and Gunner A. C. Ellingford. The Official Record of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force has been freely drawn upon, and many passages reproduced, while for local history we are indebted to the publishers<sup>1</sup> of Father Meistermann's "Guide to the Holy Land" for permission to make copious extracts. The lines headed "The Acting Bombardier" appealed to us as so humorously expressive that we obtained the special permission of the proprietors of *Punch* for their inclusion. We are much indebted to Lt.-Col. T. Gibbons, D.S.O., for permission to include in its entirety the chapter headed "The Old Road," extracted from his excellent book "With the 5th Essex in the East." Our acknowledgment and thanks are also due to the Editors of

<sup>1</sup> Burns, Oates & Washbourne, Ltd., London.

the *Daily Mail* and *The Times* for permission to quote the passages describing the Mosque of El Azhar, and Jaffa, respectively.

Not only have we drawn from all these sources, but also, as will be gathered, from our imagination. May we be forgiven for putting into the mouths of fictitious characters dramatic and other description which, if not actually true, may be regarded as typical.

For the many excellent pen-and-ink drawings which form the bulk of the illustrations we have to thank Mr. Gordon Jackson—an erstwhile member of the Battery. The majority were executed on the spot, and are now reproduced for the first time.

EDWIN C. AXE

EDWIN BLACKWELL

ROMFORD,

11th November, 1924.

(ex-N.C.O.'s, "B" Bty., 271st Bde.)

#### POSTSCRIPT

It is nearly two years since we penned the last word of this volume, and during the intervening period we have been considerably exercised in our minds anent the problem of publication, the difficulties of which have, at times, appeared almost insuperable. We are indebted to those Officers, ex-officers and ex-members of the 271st Brigade and "B" Battery whose ready assistance has been an important factor in the publication of this volume. We are also specially and deeply indebted to J. J. Holme, Esq., of the well-known firm of publishers, Messrs. Butterworth & Co., Bell Yard, London, for his sympathetic and invaluable technical assistance. Without his help, guidance and specialised knowledge this book would, in all probability, never have materialised, certainly not in its present form.

E. C. A.

E. B.

October, 1926.



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## INTRODUCTION

FORMED in the year 1908, when the Volunteer Force was disbanded and the new Territorial Army, built upon the old foundations, came into existence, the 2nd Essex Battery, R.F.A., was really the old No. 8 Company (Essex) Volunteer R.G.A., continued under another name and new conditions.

No. 8 Company had had its Headquarters in Romford for a great many years, and in common with many other volunteer units maintained a high standard of efficiency and keenness. In the year 1895 it gained the premier place in the United Kingdom as the best Volunteer Garrison Artillery Company at heavy gun practice, by winning the valuable trophy presented by the late Queen Victoria, in which competition representative Canadian batteries also competed. This trophy is still held by its present-day successor, the 338th (Essex) Field Battery, R.A.

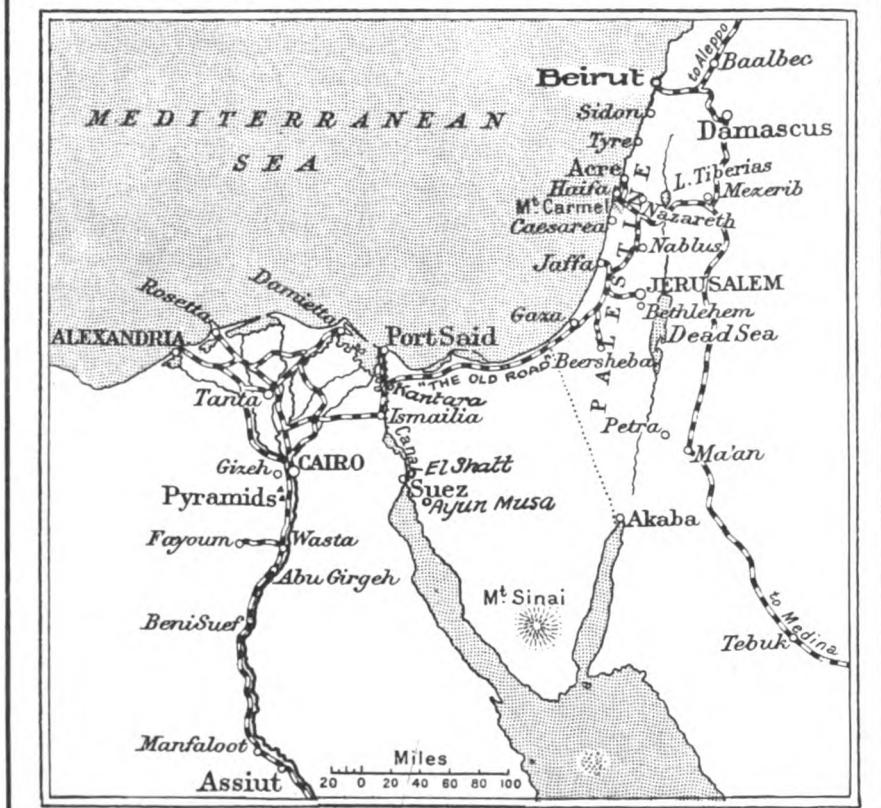
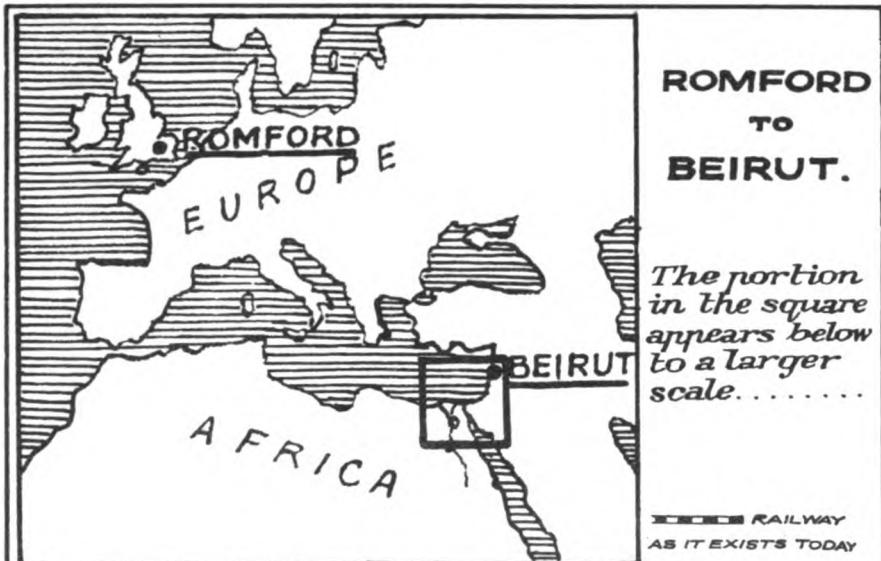
When the new Battery was formed as a Field Battery, a majority of the members of the No. 8 Company found that they were unable to accept service under the new conditions, but a fair number of the younger men continued their service in the Territorial Army, and these formed the nucleus of the 2nd Essex Battery, under the command of Major C. E. Castellan. This Battery was included in the 2nd East Anglian Brigade, commanded by Lieut.-Colonel W. S. Duff, V.D. Progress was slow at first, but steadily improved year by year until 1914, and when the Battery occupied the new Headquarters that had been specially built for it in Romford it was as efficient a Territorial Battery as could be expected, considering the limited time at its disposal for training.

The efficiency and keenness of all ranks in that critical year were due in no small measure to the personality and general excellence of its regular permanent staff instructor, B.S.M. E. S. Bristow, M.B.E., who was assisted until the early months of the year by B.S.M. G. P. Clauson, and shortly before the outbreak of war by B.S.M. C. E. Thorpe.

The Territorial Army of those days owed a great deal to that capable band of regular officers and non-commissioned officers whose mission it was to instruct and train the citizen army in its military duties. Long years of experience in the art of handling men, gained in the army at home and in many of the outposts of the Empire in distant lands, had eminently fitted them for their duties in the Territorial Army—duties which demand a fund of tact and good humour and the precept of a soldierly example, besides up-to-date military knowledge.

The 2nd East Anglian Brigade changed its title to 271st Brigade, R.F.A., in the early days of the war, and the 2nd Essex Battery became known as "B" Battery, 271st Brigade. Under this name it will be seen that the Battery travelled far, staying in Flanders a short time in 1915, moving to Marseilles, thence to Cairo and the Suez, finally journeying East through Gaza, Jaffa and Jerusalem in the wake of the Turk. Armistice day found it well into Syria at Beirut, and demobilisation took place from Cairo. The reconstituted post-war Battery, still at the Headquarters in Hornchurch Road, Romford, is now known as the 338th (Essex) Field Battery, R.A.





# ROMFORD TO BEIRUT

## CHAPTER I

### IN ENGLAND

August 4, 1914—Nov. 17, 1915

At eleven o'clock in the morning of June 28, 1914, in Servia, the Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his morganatic wife, the Princess of Hohenberg, were assassinated at Sarejevo. By eleven o'clock on November 11, 1918, as a consequence, homes had been emptied and the pinch of privation felt, industry brought to a standstill, nations had become bitterly embroiled, vast areas of fertile country had been devastated by the ravages of war, and six millions of human beings had been destroyed or mangled.

Romford contributed a minute but valuable quota of Britain's armies, and a portion of this small contingent was a battery of artillery—B/271. It is merely with the experiences of this comparatively insignificant unit in the world-wide catastrophe of 1914-1918 that the present volume deals, and although no epic fights, great honours, or glory can be chronicled, yet the unit's travel in France and the East was replete with incident of undeniable interest.

It seems providential that about July 1914 most Territorial units were away at annual camps, and on July 26 the Battery detrained at Lydd Camp to undergo its annual training and gunnery practice, little dreaming that three years later, amidst a whirl of dust, it would be driving through the narrow streets of Lydda in Palestine in pursuit of the retreating

Turk. A coincidence indeed, and a contrast. Raw youths from office and workbench, dubiously endeavouring to make a back-strap fulfil the function of a throatlash, had been transformed into keen-eyed, bronzed men, knowing the 18-pounder inside and out, and capable of improvising a complete set of harness from a couple of headgears, a stolen donkey-saddle, and yards of rope. The possibility and even probability of war with Germany had been stated in no uncertain terms by distinguished soldiers and others many years prior to 1914, yet it is doubtful if the average citizen ever seriously considered that the actual event was impendent. Certainly it was never thought that the Territorials, formed primarily for home defence, would at a most critical period, soon after the outbreak of hostilities, be called upon to fight on foreign soil, shoulder to shoulder with the regular army.

It would seem that the War Office was prepared for the dramatic turn of events on the fateful Fourth of August, for on August 2, with only half their annual training completed, most Territorial units were recalled. Our Battery was ordered back to Romford at a few hours' notice, and the men dismissed to their homes to hold themselves in readiness to report on receipt of mobilisation orders. Few will forget the excited groups arriving at the Drill Hall in Hornchurch Road throughout the day of August 5. This mobilisation was anticipated; preparations had been hastily completed to get the Battery ready for a quick move to its pre-arranged station on the East coast. Immediately the general mobilisation was known, one section of the Battery was brought up to its full war complement, both in personnel and animals.

Late in the afternoon of August 7 the parade ground at the Headquarters presented the appearance of a horse mart. The previously appointed Remount Officer had lost no time, and the unpleasant task of commandeering animals in Romford and the outlying districts proceeded with comparative smoothness. Horses of all sizes, inspected in the streets, stables and fields, and passed as sound in wind and limb, arrived singly and in batches. It was no uncommon sight



REPRODUCTION OF THE  
LAST BATTERY ORDERS  
ISSUED PRIOR TO THE WAR.



## 2nd Essex Battery. R.F.A., ROMFORD.

### ORDERS

(PART 1)

For Month ending Friday, July 31st, 1914

By Major G. E. CASTELLAN, R.F.A., Commanding.

#### ORDERLIES.

For Week ending July 4 ...	Lieut. A. W. Matcham.	Sergt. Patience.	Temptr. Leith.
" " " 11 ...	H. V. Capon.	" Cutler.	" Watts.
" " " 18 ...	A. W. Matcham.	Corp. Lucas.	" Leith.
" " " 26 ...	E. C. Pryce.	Sergt. Bryant.	" Watts.

Sunday, 5 ...	Gun Laying and Fuze Setting Examination, Parade 10.30 a.m.; for those not yet examined only, and Sergeants.
" 12 ...	Battery Gun Drill, Parade 10 o'clock.
" 19 ...	Mounted Parade, for those detailed, 10.30 a.m.
" 26 ...	(See below.)
Monday, 6, 13 & 20	Trained Drivers. Riding Drill, 8 p.m.; Recruit Drivers. Riding Drill, 8.45 p.m.; N.C.O.'s, Class and Gunners Gun Drill Parade, 8.15 p.m. Lectures to Battery Staff, 8.15. All Members particularly requested to attend.
Tuesday, 7, 14 & 31	Battery Gun Drill. All Officers, N.C.O.'s and Gunners should attend in uniform if possible. Drivers Harnessing up and Driving Drill. All Ranks Parade, 8.15 p.m.
Wednesday, 1, 8, 15 & 22	N.C.O.'s and Battery Staff. Riding Drill, 8.15 p.m. Gun Laying and Fuze Setting, 7 to 8 p.m., and 8.15 to 9.15 p.m.
Thursday, 2, 9 & 16	Signalling Class, 8.15 p.m. Remainder. Harnessing up and Hooking in Parade, 8 p.m. Lecture to N.C.O.'s and Lead Drivers on Field Movements, 8.15. All Ranks Parade 8.15 p.m., for Packing Harness, Stores, &c.
Friday, 3, 10, 17	Recruits Riding Drill, Parade 8 o'clock. Recruit Gunners, Parade, 8.15 p.m.
" 24	All Ranks Parade, 8.15 p.m. Packing Harness, Stores, &c.
Saturday, 4, 11, 18	Gun Laying and Driving Drill for N.C.O.'s, Gunners and Drivers, 2.30 to 4.30 p.m.
" 25	Battery Parade (all Ranks) 2 o'clock for entraining Gums, &c.

CAMP.—Annual Camp will take place at Lydd, from 26th July to 10th August, 1914. All applications for leave from any portion of Annual Training must be submitted to the Battery Officer not later than 7th July (Endorsed by Major-General).

SUNDAY, 26th JULY.—Battery will Parade at Drill Hall, at 8 a.m., in Marching Order (Dismounted) en route for Annual Camp at Lydd. Postal Address, and Essex Battery, R.F.A. Camp, Lydd. Kit Bags, &c., must be left at Drill Hall and later than 10 o'clock on Saturday morning. N.C.O.'s and Drivers will superintend packing of Sub-section Stores. Harnessing up, Driving, Gun Laying and Fuze Setting.

DRILLS.—EFFICIENCY.—N.C.O.'s, Drivers, and Men engaged in Mounted Duty, must attend and hold their number of Efficiency Drills, mounted. To enable them to carry this out, N.C.O.'s and Men must attend on eight allotted them as foregoing Orders.

All ranks are reminded that to be returned as efficient they must perform the prescribed number of Drills and attend Camp.

GUN LAYING and FUZE SETTING EXAMINATION.—All N.C.O.'s and Gunners are urged to make a special effort to qualify and the Major-General Battery to release the Brigade Specialists Cap. All Sergeants must qualify and should reserve for their own Sub-sections.

ORDERLIES.—All Officers, especially Orderly Sergeants, must attend Principal Parades during their week of Duty, or arrange for a substitute. All Ranks, especially Orderlies, should Parade in Uniform. Orderly Transporters to stand for Parade on Battery Parade nights. Orderly Sergeants will fall in in all Parades and Call the Roll, and must see that the Colour is closed during Battery Parades.

BATTERY STAFF.—The attention of the Battery Staff is particularly directed to the Riding Parades on Wednesday evenings. Officers who have been good riders can remain on the Battery Staff.

BONUS.—A Bonus of £1 will be paid to all Non-Commissioned Officers and Men who attend Camp for the full period and perform their full number of Drills.

HARNESS.—Harness and Saddlery has been well allotted to Sub-Sections. Men must see that it is kept clean and in good order. A weekly inspection will be held, and Points awarded for clean Harness, which will count towards the Sub-Section Cap.

BADGES.—(Still-at-Arms, Driving, Gunners, &c.). These badges are competed for annually, and only those N.C.O.'s and Men who have placed them in the latest competition are entitled to wear them until the next competition, when they must again qualify, in order that they may continue to wear them. Any Man who is now wearing a badge for which he has failed to qualify at the last examination must henceforth discontinue to do so. In the event of any Man failing to re-qualify he must return his badge to Store.

(Signed)

G. E. CASTELLAN, Major,  
Commanding 2nd Essex Battery, R.F.A.

to see vans left horseless in the roads. A good-looking pair of light draught horses would be followed by a heavy van horse in charge of a carter, who, doubtless, had been placidly driving him between the shafts an hour or so earlier. A pair of splendidly conditioned bays stands out in recollection among the motley arrivals ; a stableman, obviously reluctant to part with old friends, had tied heavy feeds round their necks, and was insistent that those taking over should see that they got the fodder. The horses which had been employed at the Riding School in the training of recruits for many years past were also pressed into service. And so the section became horsed.

As soon as the animals arrived at Headquarters they were despatched to the railway siding and entrained. Meanwhile, guns, wagons, rations and equipment had been loaded, men detailed to particular sub-sections which most were destined to serve until the end, and a half-Battery,<sup>1</sup> fully ready for anything the ominous future had in store, was completed.

At length, men, horses and guns were all on board the troop train, and shortly before midnight the Section was on its way to the East coast, accompanied by the good wishes of a large cheering crowd of townspeople who had collected at the railway station to see it off. For it was a strange and stirring happening, and in those early days few people were unaffected by the enthusiasm and fever of war. Neither the immensity nor the full significance of the undertaking was reflected in the joyous farewells of August 1914; the poignant and heartrending partings of later months, aye, and later years, were unfortunately engendered by a knowledge of past horrors and experiences which, happily, were not then anticipated.

The Section detrained at Felixstowe, and was billeted at Langley's Farm, Lower Walton, where it remained for some weeks, occupying defensive positions in co-operation with

<sup>1</sup> At this date, a Field Battery of 18-pounders comprised only two sections of two guns each.

the infantry, in preparation for the long-talked-of invasion of the East coast by a German raiding force, an attempt at which was considered very possible in the early days of the war.

At this time ideas were most vague as to the extent of the powers with which the troops were vested ; rations were short at Felixstowe, and a tradesman philosophically stood by when his bakers' delivery van was stopped and its contents commandeered by a sergeant armed with no more authority than a khaki uniform.

The other Section of the Battery left behind at Romford was quickly brought up to strength and billeted for a short period at Collier Row, thence marching to Colchester, and bivouacking with the remainder of the Brigade in Lexden Park. Here, in October, it was rejoined by the Section from Felixstowe. This half of the Battery moved by road from the coast, stopping one night in very satisfactory billets at Ipswich. The O.C. was determined that this Section should reflect credit on its arrival, and the column arrived in a blaze of glinting steelwork, resplendent harness, and pipe-clayed traces. The last item became a by-word for weeks afterwards.

Major C. E. Castellan, who had commanded the Battery since its formation, relinquished command about this time, and returned to Romford, in connection with the organisation and training of a second-line unit. The late Major R. A. Hatton (then Captain) was posted to the command of the Battery. Also, Lieut.-Colonel R. M. Laurie, D.S.O., at that time Major in command of the 3rd Essex Battery of Grays (afterwards absorbed partly by B/271), was appointed Brigade Commander *vice* Lieut.-Colonel W. S. Duff, V.D., and remained in command of the Brigade until the termination of the war.

At the approach of winter the Brigade struck camp, and went into billets in and around Colchester, the 2nd Essex Battery being billeted at Oliver's Farm and The Chase, Shrub End, and in sundry houses in the village of Layer de la Haye.

For months the unit was engaged in battery training,



MAJOR R. A. HATTON

COMMANDED " B " BATTERY FROM NOVEMBER 1914 TO  
FEBRUARY 26, 1917  
(KILLED IN FRANCE, OCTOBER 1918)



varied with periodical tactical schemes in which the whole Brigade took part, and in these exercises it was invariably assumed that an enemy raiding force had landed on Mersea Island. The neighbourhood of Fingringhoe and Wivenhoe was continually visited, and acres of the surrounding country were dug up for gun pits. These were usually filled in after a lapse of a few days. Full of zeal, officers would make reconnaissances, plan schemes, and carry out skeleton manœuvres, all of which were repeated *ad nauseam* week after week. Sometimes "the enemy" came from the East, and were annihilated by four junior N.C.O.'s, representing guns, with a subaltern in charge, amusing himself with a prismatic compass and a Mark IV Director. At others, the Battery (of ten mounted men) would retire from the West, after carrying out an exquisite movement in approved Field Artillery Training style.

So winter gave place to spring, and spring to early summer, and the men strained at the leash and pined for the real thing. Rumours that the Brigade was for foreign service in the near future failed one after another to materialise, until at length a growing conviction took possession of the men that the docket of the 2nd East Anglian Brigade had fallen through the back of its pigeon-hole in the War Office, and was hidden in the dust. A farewell review by His Majesty the King, at Braiswick, on the outskirts of Colchester, early in 1915, as well as a week's gunnery practice on Salisbury Plain, did much to stimulate the hope that one day the Brigade would proceed overseas, if only the war lasted long enough. Lasted long enough ! Their wildest dreams could not have pictured them in the desolate monotony of the Jordan Valley in 1918, pinned between the Mount of Temptation and the Cliffs of Moab, hoping for anything to relieve the fever-stricken inactivity of a seldom-sung phase of the war. Dust and evening dankness, mirages and mosquitoes, utter solitude and sand-fly fever, and a parching, blinding midday sun, when it were pleasant to receive an occasional shell from an obliging enemy.

Early in May 1915 the Brigade moved out of billets to occupy army huts at Stanway, which had been erected during the winter months. This occupation was, however, of short duration, for two days later the Brigade was repacked in haste, and entrained for Hemel Hempstead. The troops were now convinced that at last their turn had come to proceed abroad. Detraining at Boxmoor station late at night, the Battery marched to the new hutment camp in Gadebridge Park. A very heavy downpour of rain and sleet and the pitch darkness of the night made progress slow and difficult along the narrow winding lanes. Stoppages were frequent, and the troops were thoroughly drenched and miserable by the time the huts were reached. To add to the general discomfort, the approach to the huts was waterlogged and deep in mud, waterfilled holes being scattered at intervals, so that guns and wagons stuck fast in the mire, and, after fruitless efforts to extricate them, they had to be left until daylight before they could be hauled out.

The Adjutant at this time was, as customary, a regular soldier, possessed of a martial figure, a fine seat on a horse and an explosive temper. The Regimental Sergeant-Major was also a regular, Sergeant-Major George Clauson, an irrespressible joker who was deservedly popular in the Brigade, and was always thoroughly up to date in his military duties. Possessed of a ruddy, cherubic countenance, he would emphasise the point of his jokes with a quaintly humorous chuckle which never failed to induce a burst of merriment among his audience, whether they understood the joke or not.

On one occasion the Adjutant arrived at the Brigade Office in an unusually irritable frame of mind, and the misdemeanours of a certain staff-sergeant came under discussion ; in a fit of exasperation, the Adjutant thumped the table, and demanded "Why *does* the Almighty allow that man to live ?" Quick as a flash came the reply from George. Springing smartly up to attention, with click of spurs, he retorted "I don't know, sir, but I'll go and see," and, turning about,

he marched briskly from the room. It was some few seconds before the irate Adjutant recovered his self-possession, and when he did, it was to demand the return of the Sergeant-Major, to whom he imparted the information that in future he would not require any more of his d——d humour.

The 54th Divisional Infantry were also concentrated around Hemel Hempstead and St. Albans, and divisional training became the order of the day.

About the middle of July the Infantry Brigades found themselves under orders for Gallipoli, but contrary to general expectation the Divisional Artillery was not detailed to accompany them. In the light of after events this was a merciful omission. Yet the lack of reinforcements was the acknowledged outstanding cause of failure on this terrible front. General Sir Ian Hamilton has declared that it was easier to get butter out of a dog's mouth than troops out of the War Office—except for the Western Front. We have the sworn testimony of General Street, the General Staff Officer of the 29th Regular Division, before the Royal Commission on the Dardanelles, that "even a fresh, well-trained brigade would have turned the scale" on April 28. No doubt it was infantry needed at the time, and possibly there was no room for more artillery, but the troops of our Battery, who had been languishing in England for nearly a year, could not lose sight of the fact that they were part of a completely trained Divisional Artillery "going spare."

So it appeared to us at that time, but, of course, it must not be forgotten that practically the entire Regular Army was overseas, and pending the organisation and training of "Kitchener's Army" as complete units, the defence of this country against the threatened German invasion devolved upon the Territorials, assuming that the enemy succeeded in eluding the vigilance of the Navy. In reality the work of the Territorial divisions still in England at that time was of first importance, but chafing and discontent among all ranks at the seeming inactivity was excusable. In the light of after events it would appear that Territorial divisions

like ours which were both trained and fit for foreign service could have been sent abroad much earlier, where they were urgently needed, the invasion bogey having been laid at rest, but who could at that time have said that there was no danger?

We were at Hemel Hempstead for some three or four months, and before chronicling our departure the following incident must be recorded. The Brigade was quartered in huts—40 or 50 men to a hut. The sergeants occupied a long hut next to the Sergeants' Mess. One night, when everyone except the guards and picquets had retired to rest, the occupants of this hut were awakened by a heavy hollow sound in the hut as if a giant had put his foot down. Clump! Clump! Clump! sounded from the other end of the hut, then a sudden snort told the occupants that a horse had somehow got into the building—or were they dreaming? But no, a sudden stumble as the animal tripped over somebody's bed, followed by a heavy clumpety-clump-clump as it careered down the hut, convinced them, and in a few seconds everyone was awake, and pandemonium reigned. It was pitch dark, and yells rang out for somebody to turn on the lights, which could only be done from the outside. Meanwhile the beast continued his heavy-footed progress over the hollow floor, scattering bed-boards and would-be sleepers. At last the lights were turned on, and the animal was secured and sent back to his stable under escort. It turned out next morning that that incorrigible humorist Q.M.S. Patience had been responsible for the night's disturbance. Returning late to camp, he had found the horse outside the huts, and had coaxed him up the wooden steps and closed the door after turning him loose.

September found the 2nd E.A. Brigade again on the move. It entrained from Hemel Hempstead for Thetford in Norfolk, where it went under canvas. Here the troops remained for about two months, when the long-expected order to proceed overseas was received at last.

It being finally decided to send the Brigade abroad, pre-

parations proceeded with commendable speed. Stores and equipment of all kinds arrived by rail, and in a very few days the batteries were fully equipped and ready for foreign service. At the same time a final three days' leave was granted to all ranks.

A wild, stormy night was that of November 13, the fierce gale uprooting the tents, scattering blankets and kits, torrential rain swamping the camp. Early next morning the gale abated, but the camp presented a sorry spectacle. Nearly all the tents had been blown down, and the lines and neighbouring fields littered with blankets and articles of personal kit which were being retrieved by wet and shivering owners. The papers in the large office marquee were nearly all recovered, but the crime sheets of the unit were missing. In consequence of the storm, the move of the Brigade to Southampton was delayed until the following day.

On the morning of November 15 the Battery entrained at Thetford for Southampton. The troops were in great spirits, and the journey to Southampton was something in the nature of a triumphal progress, crowds on station platforms, people in wayside houses and fields all feeling it incumbent on them to cheer and shout farewell to yet another draft for overseas. So many similar troop trains had passed in the same direction during the course of the last fifteen months, but so few troops had returned, except in those trains marked with the familiar red cross.

It was cold and dreary when the Battery reached Southampton at 6.30 A.M. on November 16. The guns and horses were loaded on a ship ready to sail at 4.30 P.M., but orders were cancelled. We were on the wrong boat!! It was due to some error of the embarkation office. Bustle and excitement. Red-tabbed officers aimlessly rushing about detailing stray men for jobs, who promptly saluted and disappeared; our own officers countermanding orders never given, repeating orders already delivered, and N.C.O.'s blaspheming. Drivers leading horses up a gangway were met by others disembarking, and in the drizzling rain many

patriots were beginning to regret they had been prevailed upon to "Remember Belgium" to such an extent. All ranks were housed in the dock sheds overnight, a route march was taken the following morning, loading again carried out on the *North-Western Miller*, and this ship eventually sailed at about 5 p.m. on November 17. A complement of gunners and N.C.O.'s had left separately on a small steam packet, the *Mona Queen*.

And so we went out into the world. Unlike troops continuously on the French front, most of the Battery did not again see old England until more than three years from this memorable November 17, 1915. Others, alas! were destined never to return.

## CHAPTER II

### FRANCE

Nov. 18, 1915—February 8, 1916

ENTERING a strange land. To most of us, leaving the homeland for the first time, and in such serious circumstances, the occasion was deeply impressive. In the chill early hours imagination was stirred by the gloomy shadows stretching from an indistinct quayside across the murky water. It was the culminating point, the reaction after the last few days of excitement, and stark reality was growing upon us. Here indeed would we soon be upon the actual ground where life was cheap, and where the comforting thoughts of insularity would be no longer with us ; war was, now, more than an unfortunate happening "across there" glowingly depicted in the daily papers, and the audience were to become actors in the grim drama. Perhaps fear was not unmixed with our emotions. Brave enthusiasm, assurance, and hankering after glory were giving place to doubt and speculation as to the Battery's fate in the coming ordeal.

A dark, forbidding and misty Le Havre received us, after a calm and uneventful crossing, in the small hours of the morning of November 18, 1915. As a matter of fact, the rank and file did not know whether France, India or Timbuctoo was to be our destination, although it was commonly understood that the Western Front would provide our baptism. In these depressing hours preceding dawn the steamer slowly slipped into a port where there was no blaze of lights, and apparently very little life. Standing shivering on the deck, we watched buildings and hulls of steamers loom up distorted

and mysterious in the gloom, only to fade away as the vessel crept carefully and slowly to her berth ; the background was a dirty-grey blanket of hazy silhouettes picked out here and there with faint blinking lights. On board was business-like activity. A burly French pilot could be discerned on the bridge, and his unintelligible dialogue with an unseen compatriot on the harbour wall was accompanied by a clanking of chains, and military orders to ourselves. The utter strangeness of it all, the feeling of loneliness, and the general tenseness were far from dispelled by the sudden boom of a signal gun, the sharp clang of a harbour bell, or weird shriek of a siren, when Le Havre seemingly woke to life as we tied up. Blue-smocked quayside men could now be seen in the coming daylight, moving about at their usual work, and were possibly wondering how many more thousands of these irresponsible khaki-clad Englishmen would be poured into their land. For they were irresponsible, and although impressionable, gloomy thoughts and emotions were never allowed long to subordinate the lighter feelings. With the full morning light, and interest roused by the dockside movement, the eeriness wore off.

It was about 7 o'clock in the morning when disembarkation was completed, and as the guns and vehicles were being parked near by, the men had an opportunity to flit away in groups and introduce themselves to the foreign environment. They were able to poke about around what is comparable to an English coffee-stall, and air their misknowledge of French, and were politely requested to "spik Engleesh, please." There was a great run on French army postcards which were being distributed in one of the dock sheds. Whilst the teams were being hooked-in, and the general sorting out completed, Captain Harris took a couple of G.S. wagons to Ordnance to complete the equipment, and finally, just before midday, the Battery marched through the town to the siding for entrainment "up the line."

French army methods of conveying troops by rail need not be enlarged on. Suffice to say it was altogether strange

to the Brigade, and the closed trucks, mostly wet and dirty, not even smelling of carbolic, and used for man or beast or both, would have been just a trifle comfortable on a long and tedious journey if a layer of straw had been spread on the floors. The train jolted out of Havre about 6 o'clock in the afternoon on its long journey to the British front. Several stops were made at towns *en route*, and the troops refreshed with hot coffee and rum supplied by the French authorities, for the weather was cold and wet and in some parts snow lay on the ground. The miserable journey occupied all the drizzling night, and about 9 o'clock the following morning the Brigade arrived at St. Omer. The sky was overcast, it was thundery, and the men were cramped, sneezing and shaking. They had detrained by 10.30, and moved off by road.

From St. Omer the Battery moved by road to Lynde, a small village about 15 kms. distant, where billets in farm-houses and barns were occupied. This was the area of Blaringhem, where the whole Divisional Artillery was concentrated, and where it came under the command of the G.O.C. 33rd Division. There had been heavy rains in this part of the country just previously, and the roads were deep in mud and churned up by the heavy military traffic. The farms were surrounded by waterlogged boggy meadows criss-crossed by dykes filled with stagnant water, and lined with poplars and pollard willows. Here it was, on the 20th of November, that the men first appreciated the fact that they were at last just behind the line, that they had arrived within measurable distance of the goal pined for in past days. The proximity of the firing line could be gauged by the reports of guns and bursting shells, and at night by the lurid lighting effect of Very lights in the distant trenches. It was here, also, that the troops learnt of estaminets and *café au rhum*, and notwithstanding the miserable weather, the newness of the conditions was wearing off, and normal spirits were returning with the bottled kind.

The Battery remained in Lynde for two days, and then

marched on through the Forest of Nieppe, staying a night at Morbecque, to a small straggling country town named Tannay (Thiennes), in the mining and industrial area of Bethune. Here we were again billeted in farms and outhouses, whilst guns were parked and horse-lines established in neighbouring fields. Such was the nature of the waterlogged soil that the horse-lines became a quaking mass of mud in a very few days, and in spite of continual changes of standings the poor beasts were more often than not standing in mud nearly up to their hocks. And to think many were used to stables and a milk-round in Romford in the dim past ! truly, they were also doing their bit. The gunners' and drivers' only remedy in attending to their horses was to strip off boots, putties and socks, and wade in barefoot if they wished to retain dry lower garments. Sets of saddlery disappeared in the sticky morass. The troops did not mind grooming (or at least "going through the motions"), when officers were watching, so much as wading ankle and knee-deep through churned-up meadows, wending their way to the horse-lines to oblige the powers that were. Also, the consistency of the mud was most disconcerting in its variety—in some places thick and clay-like, and in others like unto condensed milk and treacle. The non-coms supervising the work from the precarious safety of islands of forage were a source of annoyance.

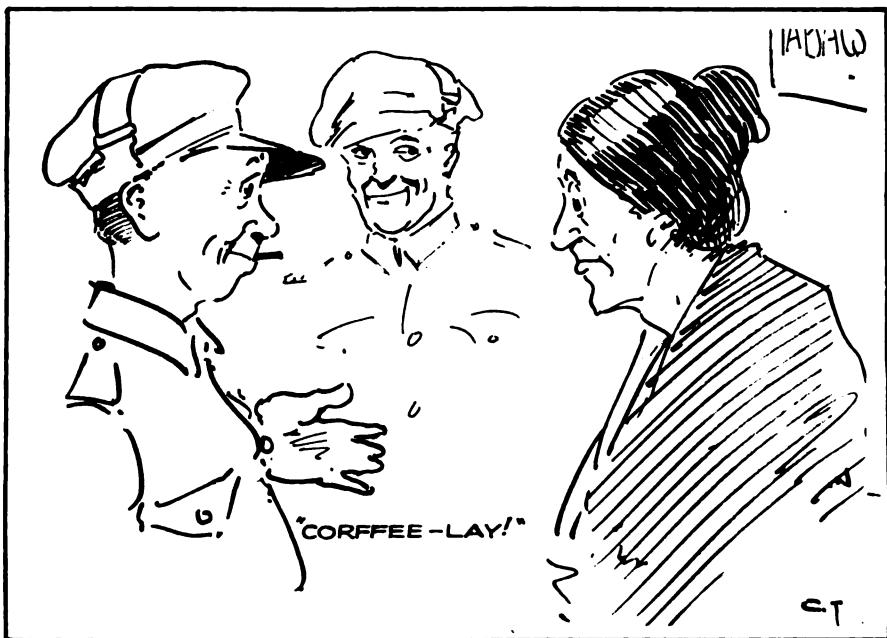
Good humour in the family circle helped things to go with a swing.

"Smith, how many more times am I to tell you not to use that —— currycomb on a horse ? And don't forget eyes and nose."

"All right, Sargin," was the retort ; "and d'yer want 'er teeth cleaned this morning, and 'oofs picked out ?"

Hoofs ! A foot under the quivering surface. Why, for all we knew, the animals had developed webbed feet !

The town itself was a wretched place ; drab, squalid and featureless, it was surrounded by the ubiquitous poplar-edged waterlogged fields. Water lay everywhere. It stank in the





middens of the farm courtyards, laid inches deep on the parade ground (chosen for its comparative dryness), and had a small drop to spare to spread under the straw of our billets. Luckily, comic incidents were always in abundance to provide a relief. Shall we forget Gunner Lone's appearance after falling into a midden of frothy mud, manure and farm refuse? And what of Driver "Bronk" asking for a "corfee-lay, old geeze"—and getting it! His namesake, also, Saddler of that ilk, speaking fluent French (?), when everyone else had failed to obtain a broom, and making himself understood with "broomee, broomee, sweepee, sweepee," accompanied by actions, during which he knocked over several bottles of *malaga* and *curacao*. We were becoming just a little seasoned, and inured to the hardships.

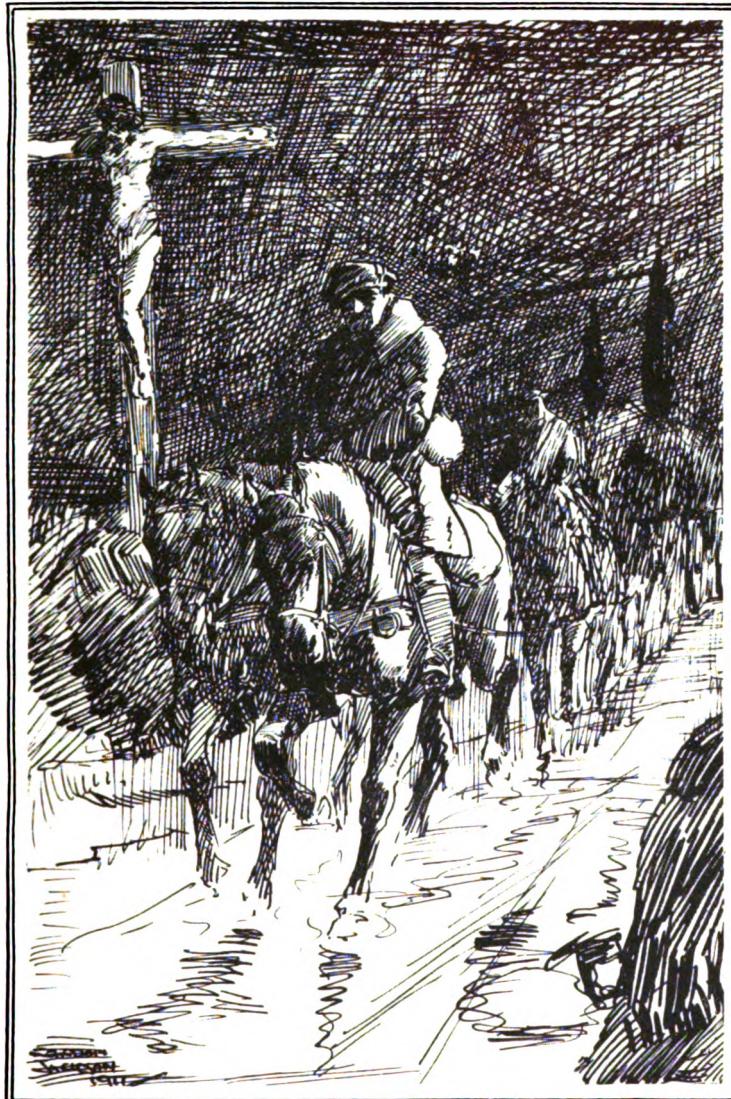
It was while the Brigade was billeted at Tannay that the officers, N.C.O.'s, and most of the gunners received their first experience of actual active service conditions of a battery in the line, for they were attached in parties to various Batteries of the 7th Divisional Artillery, which were in action on the Festubert and La Bassee section of the front. The Brigade thus had the advantage of some other Brigades, who, perforce of circumstances, were rushed up from the base and put into the line without initial experience of actualities. It certainly was of immense advantage to go into action with the previous knowledge of conditions thus acquired, and was undoubtedly a very wise precaution on the part of Divisional Staff, or Army Command, or Room 660/K, War Office, or whoever else was responsible.

The majority of our Battery, which later became known as "B" Battery, 271st Brigade, R.F.A., or, for short, B/271, were attached to the 25th Battery, R.F.A., which was in action near Festubert, or, to be more accurate, near where Festubert had been, for the town was nothing more than a pile of tumbled bricks and skeleton houses, its few remaining inhabitants living in the cellars. The old familiar "General" omnibuses, containing pictures of Epping Forest, conveyed the parties from Tannay to the important market and industrial

town of Bethune, at that time undisturbed by shells, but afterwards the scene of hellish wrecking, bombardment, and slaughter. From Bethune the parties marched on foot to the village of Gorre, and thence on about three miles to the Battery position. A more desolate and unwholesome stretch of country it would be difficult to find than this sector of the British line. The country was flat and uninteresting, and for many miles was inundated with water due to the heavy rains and damming of canals. The rains were also damned. It was a marshy waste scattered with the ruins of once prosperous villages, pervaded with the sickening stench of stagnant water and long unburied corpses lying in exposed positions between the lines where it was impossible for the burial parties to reach them. The Battery position was sited at a road junction, two guns in pits on each side of the road and an advanced section of two guns a few hundred yards ahead. An estaminet stood at the corner still comparatively undamaged, in the outbuildings of which the gunners and all the Festubert rats were billeted. Although well within the danger area, a French woman and her two daughters had steadily declined to leave their old home, and continued to dispense beer, rum and cordials to the soldiers, indifferent alike to the roar of the guns in their "front garden" and the bursting of enemy shells in the neighbourhood of the house.

We all hold warm memories of this Regular Battery. Arriving as nervous babes to the firing line, this seasoned unit received us in a homely and reassuring manner, and no sooner were we attached than we were at once drawn into the atmosphere of camaraderie, and made to feel that we belonged to the unit. Its nonchalant efficiency inspired confidence.

The observation post was established in the ruins of a brewery which had been badly shattered at an earlier period of the war, when the British front line ran within a hundred yards of it. One angle still remained erect, and the top, reached by a ladder, was provided with a crow's nest which



6 P.M. NOVEMBER 23RD. 1915.  
ENTERING TANNAY (THIENNES), FRANCE.



afforded an excellent view of the front line trenches. The telephone dug-out was securely constructed deep down in the cellars under the fallen mass of the building, and communication with the crow's nest was through an improvised speaking-tube, which had once been a beer-pipe of some description. A forward observation station was located in the support trenches ; these and the communication trenches leading to the front line were in a deplorable condition, the front line being little better. The foul, muddy water drained into the trenches, converting them into noisome ditches. To reach this F.O.P. by daylight, officers and signallers had to wade along a distance of about a mile through the tortuous length of flooded communication trenches, waist deep in many places ; conditions which only British soldiers and huge sewer rats appeared to survive. But there was a war on. Needless to say, the F.O.P. was manned under cover of darkness whenever possible, when the trenches could be approached by a cross-country route which would have been extremely unsafe by day.

We remained at Tannay until December 12, and then the Battery packed up. Yes, packed up ! Does the reader understand and appreciate the full import of this phrase ? Commanding Officers have a mania in common with antique dealers and entomologists for collecting, hoarding up and transporting a curious collection of useful (?) articles and materials, and fragments thereof. We perceive our Battery moving off (after the eighteenth attempt) loaded up, on and under every limber and other vehicle, with huge planks, coils of rusty wire-netting, deck chairs, lengths of iron rails, bales of hay, excessive and unauthorised kit, and all the usual impedimenta of artillery equipment, minus as much as had been lost by annexation to other units or local inhabitants.

That comic vehicle the Battery cook's cart, or Officers' Mess cart, as it was alternatively called according to one's point of view (the most unsatisfactory class of vehicle ever produced by the War Office for withstanding the exigencies of active service), was an everlasting source of annoyance. Built

for moderately light work, it was made to carry three or four times the load intended, with the result that sometimes the springs or shafts would break or occasionally a wheel would collapse, and the cargo would be shot out into the mud, together with the driver, while if no actual breakages happened it might reasonably be expected to become bogged three or four times in a day's march.

The task of pulling the guns and wagons out of the gun park at Tannay was a trying one for both men and horses, the teams, unable to get a foothold, floundering in the deep mud. And it was pouring in torrents all the while. However, they were all hauled out at last by dint of hard work, some harder cursing, and twelve-horse teams. The commencement of the trek to Ames, a large village a few miles past St. Hilaire, and south-west of Lillers, was an inglorious procession. Cooking dixies, spades and sodden horse-rugs were shed every few yards, as were tears by the Brigade-Major. He was riding up and down the column, pouring forth caustic comments to all and sundry. But still, there was a difference between circumstances in France and a spick-and-span field day in England.

Ames was reached at dusk, and the billets were much cleaner and more comfortable than those recently vacated.

The elongated rectangle comprising the village of Ames contained at least thirty estaminets and divers cafés. One directly opposite the main billet will be remembered. It was presided over by a portly and elderly Madame, known variously to the boys as "Ma," "Mother," and sometimes other names which she did not "compree"; her familiarity with the troops was not remotely connected with the fact that she was, despite her age, an expert ogler, although she had only one eye.

After work, and sometimes—be it whispered—during its progress, the crowded room, with its small bar poked away unostentatiously in a corner, and the familiar coke stove jutting into the centre, presented the setting of a typical scene behind the British line in Flanders. Some drivers and





AN ESTAMINET SCENE.

gunners would be playing cards for nuts, or writing letters to their (or somebody else's) girls, at the small tables in the room. Others, grouped about in chairs arranged in circles, would be exercising either mouth-organs or their vocal chords. The playing of gramophones, pianos and other loud-sounding instruments was prohibited by order of the French military authorities, showing a marked contrast to the expressed feelings and war customs and sentiments of the English at home. The inevitable and ubiquitous long conical glass of *café-au-lait* was much in evidence, and intermingled were glasses of crude and sour *bière* and smaller glasses of *grenadine*, *malaga*, *curaçao*, *crème de menthe* and other cordials and wines obtainable for the small sum of three or four sous. And a haze of *deux-sous* cigar smoke enveloped the whole.

The one or two local inhabitants seated inside were regaled with English topical songs, parodies of sentimental melodies, and—snatches of psalms and hymns! in fact, anything where a harmonious effect could be attempted. Extemporised and local French jingles and parodies were murdered nightly (so far as language is concerned), and one of the most popular doggerels commenced somewhat on the following lines :

Après la guerre finie,  
Et tous les Anglais partis, etc., etc.

The rest has been rigorously censored.

It must be confessed that the rough and ready company, with whom at Ames were one or two Jocks billeted near by, could sing exceedingly well ; it is curious, but nevertheless true, that groups of Tommies always found a mutual bond of good fellowship in singing practically anything in concerted fashion. In this way opinions on certain exalted personages would be freely expressed without centralising the blame on any particular individual, and quite a number of regimental ditties were delightfully personal. For instance, in this fashion, the singers informed all and sundry that if they

wanted the sergeant-major, they (the said singers) knew where he was, etc.

The customary Christmas festivities were held in the village schoolroom, and were a great success, no effort having been spared on the part of the officers and men to ensure that the arrangements were worthy of the occasion. A barrel of beer had been obtained, and Driver Gold attended to the obsequies of a pig purchased (we believe so) locally. Roast pork, plenty of vegetables, a double fag-issue, and two pints of beer per man looked something like Christmas. What more could the flesh-pots desire? The musical programme was supported by a winded and non-stopable concertina. Several of the troops, of course, dined out at estaminets, the staple diet being eggs (supplied by the diner) and *pommes de terre frites*. The eggs were sometimes stolen from the roost at the back of the estaminet, and innocently brought round to the front for frying.

Late on the night of December 26 orders were received that one section from each of the batteries would go into action on the morrow. The Right Section of the Battery, with signallers and telephonists, consequently marched out of the village at about 9 o'clock the next morning, the 27th.

Marching all day, the Brigade reached Nœux les Mines about 5 o'clock in the evening, where a short halt was made and the guns prepared for action, the first line wagons proceeding direct to a wagon line in Annecquin. Turning into the Vermelles road, the Brigade marched on for a distance of about five miles, reaching the battered little town of Vermelles just as darkness was setting in. The road was bordered on each side by the ruins of houses, some mere heaps of bricks and masonry, while others still remained erect, roofless and windowless. Here and there a roof, more or less intact, still protected the interior of a shaky building from the rain and afforded cover for the gunners of the batteries close at hand. The position the Brigade was to occupy extended on either side of the road opposite the ruins of a large château, reputed to have been used earlier in the war as a head-



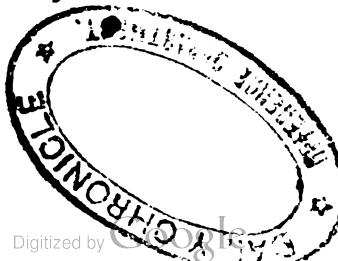


quarters by the German Crown Prince. The gunpits were evidently of French origin, well made, and very skilfully concealed among the ruins of the houses, subterranean passages connecting the pits and command post. The batteries of the 72nd Brigade, R.F.A., which were being relieved, withdrew their guns, and the position was occupied by the 271st Brigade, and preparations made for a lengthy stay.

Observation officers and telephonists went forward, and fire was opened the following morning with registration on the German trenches, a considerable quantity of ammunition being expended during the day. On this front, the scene of continual heavy fighting, the British line was very close to that of the enemy, and the trench system complicated by considerable modifications of the line necessitated by attack and counter-attack ; in some places the Germans held one end of a section of trench while the British held the other. As a consequence, mathematical precision was early called for in the Battery's solo efforts.

Late in the evening of the day after the arrival of the Brigade in the position, instructions were received to prepare to move out of action immediately. This was most surprising, but in the light of the secret orders and after events it was certainly no reflection on the Battery's work. Officers and staffs were recalled from the observation posts and the wagon teams and limbers were ordered up from the wagon line.

Shortly before midnight the Brigade was marching back along the Vermelles road, and the batteries it had so recently relieved were once more installed in the position, after a long march out of action the night before, and back again a few hours later. The first line wagons were picked up at the wagon lines in Annecquin and a hurried march was resumed, the Brigade arriving back in Ames at about 9 o'clock the following morning—an all-night march. Since leaving the village two days previously it had covered nearly forty-two miles in bad weather, occupied a position and had engaged numerous "targets," and this in forty-seven hours. There were no casualties. On December 30 secret orders were



received at Divisional Headquarters that the 54th Divisional Artillery was required for service in Egypt.

A few days after the Vermelles interlude—to be exact, on New Year's Day, 1916—the Battery moved from Ames to the pleasant little town of Therouanne, about seven miles from Berguette, where the troops went into billets. This town, apparently, had not been so overrun with soldiers as had so many others closer to the main roads leading to the front line. Billets were cleaner and more comfortable, and the townspeople even more kindly disposed than usual.

A week after our arrival at Therouanne it became generally known among the troops that the Brigade was under orders for Egypt, where, so it was understood, it was to rejoin the 54th Division, which had been withdrawn from Gallipoli. The secret orders to this effect were the cause of the unexpected withdrawal of the guns from action in Vermelles. Fatigue excursions were made to the neighbouring centres of Busnes and Lillers to draw stores, and in this way various very junior N.C.O.'s were initiated into the art of taking entire charge of parties. This is mentioned because the single stripe (unpaid) non-com. is apt to be overlooked in commenting upon the share of work and responsibility undertaken by different ranks. In the Artillery, at all events, and in "B" Battery especially, the acting unpaid supernumerary lance-Bombardier must not be forgotten for his maid-of-all-work duties. These first stripes in the army require a sweet temper and imperturbable nature to maintain. Receiving gunner's pay, yet doing all the fatigues passed on by the Sergeant, disowned by the Corporal, and detailed by the full Bombardier, he always came up smiling.

Let him speak for himself :

#### THE ACTING BOMBARDIER<sup>1</sup>

When Julius Cæsar took 'is guns along the pavvy road,  
An' strafed the bloomin' eathens on the Rhine,  
The men 'oo did 'is dirty work an' bore the 'eavy load  
Was the men 'ose job did correspond to mine.

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted by special permission of the proprietors of *Punch*.

When Nap dug in 'is swossung-kangs be'ind the ugly Fosse  
 And made the Prooshians sweat their souls with fear,  
 The men 'oo 'elped 'im most of all to slip it well across  
 Was the men with actin' rank of bombardier.

Oh, the Colonel strafes the Old Man, an' strafes the Capting too,  
 Then to the Subs the 'eavy language flows ;  
 They come an' calls their Numbers One an inefficient crew,  
 An' down it comes to junior N.C.O.'s ;  
 An' then the B.S.M. chips in an' gives 'em 'oly 'ell,  
 An' the full edition's poured into the ear  
 Of the man that's got to be ubreck (an' you be — blest as well)—  
 The man with actin' rank o' bombardier.

Or if there's nothin' doin' of a winter afternoon,  
 The Old Man's at 'eadquarters 'aving tea,  
 The section subs is feedin' up with oysters in Bethoven,  
 The Capting's snoring out at the O.P. ;  
 The Sergeant-Major's cleaned 'is teeth an' gone a prommynard,  
 The N.C.O.'s is somewhere drinkin' beer,  
 An' the man they've left to work an' drill an' grouse an' mount the  
 guard  
 Is of course your 'umble actin' bombardier.

Oh, I'm the man that takes fatigues for bringin' stores at night,  
 Conducting G.S. wagons in the snow,  
 An' I'm the man that scrounges round to keep the 'ome fires bright  
 (" An' don't you bloomin' well be pinched, you know ") ;  
 An' I'm the man that lashes F.P.i's up to the gun,  
 An' acts the nursemaid 'alf the ruddy day ;  
 An' fifty other little jobs that ain't exactly fun  
 Accompany one stripe (without the pay).

But no, we never grousing in the Roy'l Artillerie ;  
 Of cheerful things to think there's quite a lot ;  
 Old Sergeant Blobbs is goin' 'ome the end of Febru'rec  
 To do instructin' stunts at Aldershot ;  
 The S.M.'s recommended ('Eavens !) for commissioned rank,  
 An' little changes mean a step up 'ere,  
 So if I keep my temper an' go easy with vang blank,  
 I'll soon drop " actin' " off the " bombardier."

To carry on with the preparations for leaving France ; horses were brought up to strength—there had been casualties owing to sickness and exposure—by remounts from surplus horses of other brigades in the line. Soon after, a number of the Battery's horses became sick, and glanders being suspected, the remainder were malined and several answering the test were destroyed.

In preparation, no doubt, for the coming exodus of our Battery, medical inspections were the order of the day, but more to the liking of the lads were the arrangements for the first real baths since landing in France. This New Year's Day was indeed a red-letter day ; the majority of the Battery travelled about eight kms. to Estree Blanche for baths at the ablution buildings attached to the coal mines there. The approach to the mines was dismal in the extreme, very much like the mining districts of South Wales, heaps of slag and coal dust. But the baths were well worth the journey.

Early on the morning of January 11 the Battery marched to Berguette station before dawn and entrained (less the drivers and horses) for Marseilles, a four days' train journey by troop train. Short stops were made at Dijon, Montreaux, Lyons, and Avignon. Marseilles was reached on the afternoon of January 14, and the guns were hauled through the town to La Valentin Camp, a distance of about three and a half miles from the centre of the town. The camp was beautifully situated on the hills above Marseilles. In the distance could be seen the snow-capped peaks of the *Alpes Maritimes*. The weather was glorious, the brilliant sunshine and warmth being in strong contrast to the cold, wet weather and clinging mud of northern France.

The Battery was completed by the arrival of the drivers and horses on the 29th. On reaching the camp, the Battery's horses were at once segregated and again tested for glanders. Several answering to the test, the whole of the horses were lost, the majority old friends from the earliest days of the war. We were rehorsed from the Remount Depôt and Indian Cavalry. The remounting of the unit caused some few days'

delay in embarking for Egypt, the remainder of the Divisional Artillery having already departed, so further opportunity was given for sampling the wonders of the Rue Cannebière and side streets.

A Marseilles yarn is worth reproducing, especially as told by the inimitable "Wally" Patience.

You may remember at Marseilles I was left behind with a rear party to clean up the camp, and "some" job it was, too. Being the last unit to leave, we had to complete the cleaning up that other units had been unable to finish. Besides the usual litter there were odds and ends of equipment, such as bandoliers, haversacks, blankets and waterproof sheets, all in more or less filthy and unserviceable condition. As there was no one to whom these articles were to be returned, we made a huge bonfire of the lot, and it was blazing merrily, when who should arrive on the scene but an exalted brass-hat, accompanied by a bevy of staff officers, evidently bent on a last tour of inspection. Marching up to the fire, the eminent one began poking about with his cane among the embers, and, as bad luck would have it, he uncovered a charred portion of blanket. Hoisting the remnant from the fire, he fixed an accusing eye on me, and demanded in a severe and incredulous tone "Quartermaster-Sergeant, what's this—a *blanket*?" Bringing my spurs together with a snap, and adopting that wooden expression of countenance reserved for such occasions, I replied "Sir!"—and before I could say anything more, something went BANG !!! in the fire, and then a succession of BANGS! and PINGS! as bullets flew in all directions; he and his staff went one way, and I went another. And that's the last I ever saw of the Lord High Red-Tab and his flock. You see, some thoughtless fool had thrown a bandolier full of live ammunition on the fire with the rest of the rubbish!

This short stay at Marseilles left us greatly impressed with the friendliness of members of Indian units stationed at the remount camp there, and in an exceedingly small wooden canteen we and Rahat Singh, Duleep Singh, Lalla Singh, etc.,

of the Bengalis mutually shared bottles of Phoenix Bière at half a franc, and compared notes.

“You been soldiering long, or only for duriation, Johnny?” one driver was heard to inquire most affectionately.

“Ya-as, sah,” was the blank reply.

“Yus, what?” pursued the inquirer.

“English good, I fight France, and get wound, sah. London it hos-peet-al do it this good, sah.”

With a flourish the Bengali exhibited a healed wound on his wrist.

“Rotten,” indefinitely agreed or disagreed the driver, sympathetically. “Bo-ko rotten. Compree France-ase, eh? What’s yer name?”

“Oh, name, sah. I am Rahat Singh,” majestically.

“Well, Rat, whatever yer monica is, it’s up to me to push the boat out.” Whereat more Bière was ordered, and so we pushed along.

It is remarkable that throughout the entire campaign the association of all the innumerable races, Eastern and Western, in the common cause of the Allies, was attended with good fellowship and an intelligent mutual understanding, and the instances of our lads’ sociability are typical.

The strange combination, often heard simultaneously, of light French chansonettes, more solid English songs and ribaldry, and haunting and weird Indian chants in characteristic Eastern monotone, was awesome and impressive, displaying in one way the might arrayed against the Central Powers. It is wonderful that such divergent temperaments could unite, the whole working as one; extremes met and fused in this welding of the Orient with the Occident.

However, the study of ethnology and racial intercourse, or whatever else it is, did not trouble us. More to the point was the choice of a suitable string of invective when a horse trod upon one’s foot during the loading operations on the quay at Marseilles Docks. For a couple of weeks had been the limit of our stay in the Sunny South, and we were now off to Egypt.



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UNDER THE PYRAMIDS  
(THE 271ST BRIGADE R.F.A., CAMP AT MENA, CAIRO, 1916)



A CORNER OF CAIRO  
(COVENT GARDEN ?)

## CHAPTER III

### CAIRO (MENA)

February 15, 1916—April 4, 1916

ON the morning of February 8, 1916, the Battery marched away from La Valentin camp, and embarked the guns, wagons and drivers on the s.s. *Maryland*, the gunners having embarked the previous day on the s.s. *Andania*. The voyage through the Mediterranean was accomplished without incident and in good weather, the transports steering a zig-zag course, accompanied by an escort of destroyers, as this was a happy hunting ground for enemy submarines. Malta was reached by the *Maryland* on the 10th, the vessel anchoring for about an hour in the roadstead off Valetta. Late in the afternoon of the 12th, Alexandria was sighted low down on the horizon, the white buildings and mosque minarets of Ras-el-Tin appearing to rise out of the turquoise surface of the sea. The steamer arrived just in time to pass into the splendid harbour before the narrow entrance through the protective minefield was closed, thus effectually sealing it against enemy warships or submarines during the hours of darkness.

It must be confessed that the conception of the land of the Pharaohs by most of us was mixed. Standing out as landmarks in a sea of vague ideas were palm-trees, deserts, dates, mummies, camels, Egyptian cigarettes, and "spinxes." It is a question how or when these were gathered together, especially by some, but during the voyage from Marseilles to Alexandria one particular gunner (no names, please!) had not failed amiably to exaggerate and distribute his knowledge

to the great satisfaction and interest of an admiring crowd, to whom he imparted scraps.

"And what's these 'ere mummies?" inquired a chum. "Old codgers dig 'em up at the British Museum or somefink, don't they?"

Our "particular" looked at him with withering contempt and scorn before he responded.

"The mummies is corpses done up in kinder puttees and peppercorns, 'erbs, hoil and stuff, so's they can be put in museums, and they ain't dug up nowhere, 'cause they lay about deserts in Egypt!"

"What are they done up in cloves and pot 'erbs for?"

"Well, ask yerself. What do they pickle pork for? And suppose you've got a good whippet yer wants to keep after it's dead—you 'ave it stuffed, don't yer? Same as stuffin' lavingder and camphor in yer Sunday duds at 'ome; it's to conserve 'em."

"Why can't they take 'em and give 'em a decent fun'ral?"

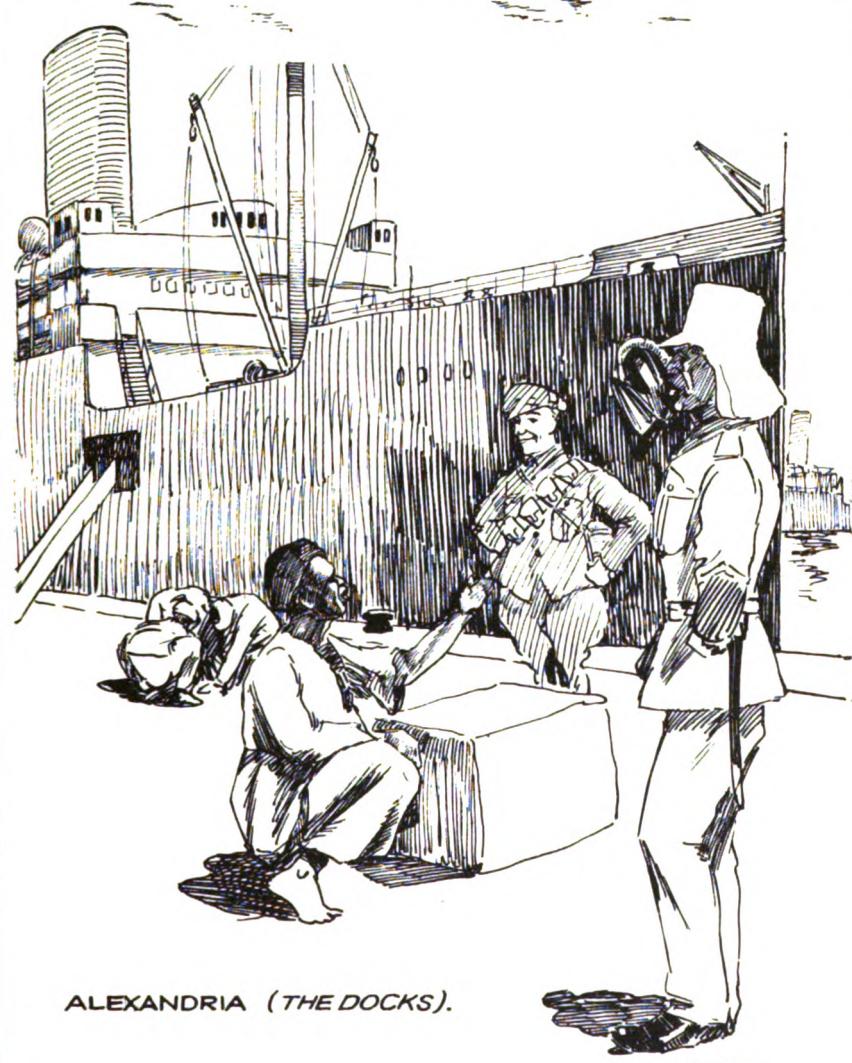
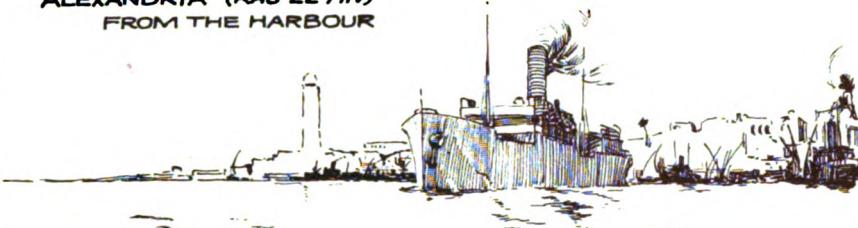
"These was all royalty, me boy, as was got to be showed in museums, and they couldn't do 'em no ways else; custom'ry and all that," so it was explained by our worthy, dismissing the discussion, and walking away.

We were kept on board about an hour or so in Alexandria Docks before disembarking, and during this period much amusement was caused by throwing odds and ends of food and wearing apparel (both in various stages of decay) to the beggars and itinerants lining the quayside, whose main cry was imperative and to the point—"Give it! Give it!! Give it!!! They generally got it (in the neck) from a Sudanese policeman.

The disembarking commenced at half-past 9 in the evening of February 14, and was immediately followed by entraining at about midnight, which was quickly carried out; at about 3 o'clock in the morning following our arrival in Egypt our train pulled into Cairo station.

The self-denial and kindness of numerous British and

ALEXANDRIA (RAS EL TIN)  
FROM THE HARBOUR



ALEXANDRIA (THE DOCKS).



French ladies resident in Cairo was manifest at this moment ; notwithstanding the early hour, a free refreshment booth was in full swing, and steaming mugs of cocoa and tea, together with cakes and rolls, were issued, the ladies themselves superintending. It seemed ages since we had spoken to an English woman.

If the troops' observations at Le Havre on French fashions and scenes were emphatic and lurid, no ordinary dictionary would ever be able to explain their remarks on the route march of the Battery from Cairo to Mena Camp, some nine or ten miles away. The motley throngs of people and sights of Cairo amazed and dazed.

The strange, multifarious Eastern street scenery will ever be remembered by members of the Battery in connection with their first march through an Egyptian town. The teeming native population in a queer mixture of European and native attire, intermingling with khaki-clad British and Australians, distinctively dressed Indian troops, or the white-robed and turbanned Bedouins ; the raucous cries of the vendors of oranges, peanuts, lemonade and a hundred and one other commodities ; the diminutive donkeys bending under the weight of indolent Arabs and Egyptians seated astride, well back on the haunches—feet trailing the ground, the while the women folk trudged behind carrying furniture, household utensils and what-not. Ponderous water buffaloes lumbering along in the fields, controlled by a naked native boy of about ten summers or less, drawing the ancient home-made wooden plough, probably identical in pattern with that used in the days of Pharaoh ; stinking mangy camels, but sedate withal, striding noiselessly by, loaded with every conceivable article, always appearing to wear a lofty supercilious air as if in profound contempt of their surroundings, the while a modern electric tram rushed by ; the native women—features hidden by yashmak or veil—balancing tall earthenware jars or chatties easily and gracefully on their heads. One recalls the large heap of *burseem* (green fodder) apparently dumped carelessly in the centre of the road, towards which

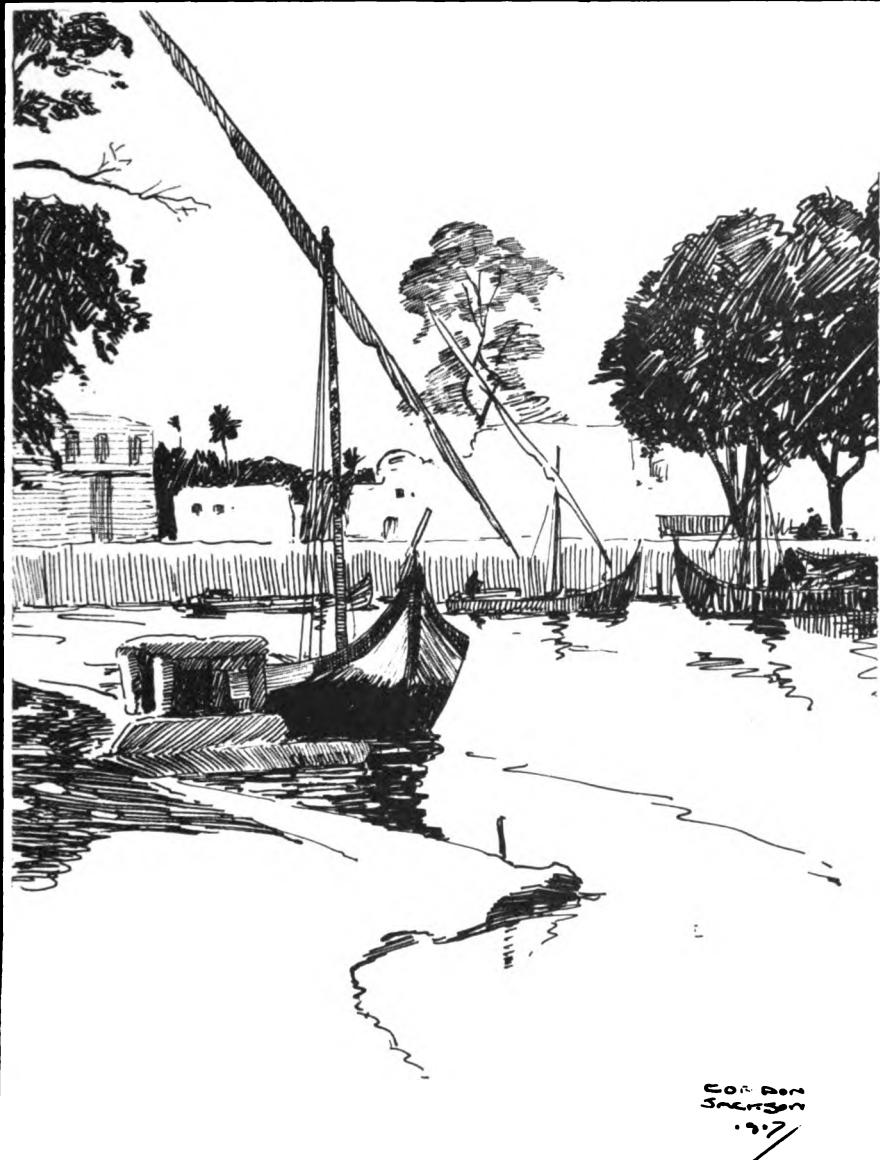
the hungry horses edged, in anticipation of snatching a juicy mouthful in passing, but which unexpectedly heaved itself into the air on the back of a camel which had been squatting all but hidden by its green load, to the complete demoralisation of the horses and disconcertion of their riders. The green stack lurched leisurely along the road, its bearer sublimely indifferent to the havoc it was causing among the teams. Ragged dirty bootboys, with their home-made box of bottles containing various dyes and creams, kept up with the column, shouting “Give it, Johnny! give it, half-piastre! *Back-sheesh!* Give it half!” Equally dirty children slouched along the footway sucking the broken end of a stem of sugar-cane, with bundles of which they were often laden.

All this whirl of strange life, the square, flat-topped white buildings, gaily-coloured surroundings with advertisements and notices posted up in English, French, Arabic, Greek, and in some places Italian, was bewildering, and ejaculations and exclamations were few and far between, but forcible and to the point when made.

The column crossed the Nile by the Kasr-el-Nil Bridge, turned round at Ghizeh corner, and entered the four-mile straight road leading to Mena Camp, under the shadow of Cheops’ masterpiece and the minor pyramids, the Sphinx and the Valley Temple of Khephren (or the “Granite Temple”), and all the ancient and historical monumental relics of Ghizeh. Away on the left, faintly discernible, at a distance of seven or eight miles, the ruin of Sakkara loomed up with the two typical *fellabin* villages of El Talibeyeh and Kom-el-Akhdar in between.

Immediately the Pyramids came into sight, our informed gunner lost no time in pointing out the “spinxes,” as he termed them.

“There’s the things I told yer about,” he said proudly; “kinder ‘ouses or castles which the ‘eads of this ‘ere country used to hang out in. Some of them ‘ere mummies is stored up there. Some of ‘em used to keep their family, as they pegged out, in special rooms.”



MOHAMMEDIYEH CANAL.  
ALEXANDRIA.





“Used to niff, didn’t it?” vulgarly interposed part of his audience.

“Only of the ’erbs and hoils,” was the reply.

“Bad enough!” rejoined a listener. “Wouldn’t like to sit down meself for a bit of bread and cheese, or some ’ot tripe and onions, wiv me dead aunt lookin’ on!”

A pause, then “It ain’t decent!” as an afterthought.

“Well, there y’are,” replied the lecturer rather lamely, having temporarily exhausted his knowledge at this juncture.

The Battery arrived in Mena Camp, and the men settled themselves down to a much easier time than the work on the French front had allowed. The unbearable heat prevented any work between eleven in the morning and three in the afternoon, and the men during this period reclined. The word “reclined” is employed after due consideration; nearly everybody attempted to sleep, but soldiers who have encamped in Egypt will recall the annoying and irritating cries of wandering Arabs among the tent-lines, which constituted a proverbial nuisance, to which must be added the permanent fly-plague.

“Wash-sheeng” is sung, rather than spoken, in a long-drawn-out wail by Ibrahim Mahomet and brethren, who slowly and silently creep among the lines with large square wicker baskets.

“Plen-tee soap; no clean, no *feloose* (money)!”

“Get out of it! *Imshee!* (Go away) you black unmentionable!” is a type of execration hurled at his cropped head. That head, always crowned with a white linen or other skull cap, hastily disappears.

“All right, Johnnie. Very nice, very sweet, very clean. *Ma-amaltish-baga* (I have done nothing),” he meekly cries as he flits away, with an object more material than an oath using its best endeavours to adhere to a trajectory culminating at his head.

It was here, also, that we learnt of the wonderful and universal uses to which the Arabs put the qualification “very good”; it stood for anything. All will recollect the

newsVendor, selling the *Egyptian Mail*, and announcing it thus :

“ ‘Gyptian Mail ; very gooder news, British ship sunk ! ”

The Battery remained in Mena Camp until April 4, during which time all the horses were clipped ; their heavy coats, however useful in Northern France, were a burden in the heat of Egypt. The men, also, suffered considerably from the heat during the first few weeks, and especially will be remembered the distressing morning of February 16, when all ranks were lined up for an hour or so for one of the doubly-blessed ceremonial inflictions. On this day, the Divisional Artillery was inspected by General Maxwell, and quite a large number of the troops collapsed with the heat and had to be carried away.

Although only in the early months of the year, the sun was extremely powerful at midday, the heat being reflected by the sand. Extraordinary temperatures were frequently recorded by a thermometer laid on the sand.

The stay at Mena afforded a splendid opportunity to “ do ” Cairo. To those of us who were out to improve our knowledge of the world and its goods (bads and indifferents), it was only necessary to invest a piastre apiece in the Cairo City tramways, and this magic carpet deposited us at Ezbekiyeh, the centre of the fashionable and European quarter of the city of Caliphs, contrasts, exorbitant prices and rare smells. Let us accompany a typical pair of “ B ” Battery drivers on visiting bent.

Wandering along the Shâri Kâmel they drifted to outside Shepheard’s magnificent hotel, which reminded them that they each possessed a ten horse-power hunger which had, without doubt, to be left behind in Cairo, and that instanter. A late dinner at Shepheard’s was out of the question ; evening dress was *de rigueur*, at least so one (whom we shall call Jim because that was not his name) was understood to inform the other, Joe, and besides it was “ Officers Only.” Possibly they would have repaired to the Savoy, had one or other been able to ask for the thoroughfare Mîdan Suleimân Pâsha, but

after gazing at street corner nameplates, Jim choked down a sob, put on a fag, and pined for a Romford street. The pleasure of drinking iced Moselle and dining with a symphony concert to aid digestion had to be forgone, so Jim and Joe forwent.

More to the point, bars and cafés abounded in the Place de l'Opera, where beer and other beverages were procurable, so they had quite a respectable meal, notwithstanding all difficulties. In one of the multitudinous dirty and small Arab cafés they harangued the proprietor, or one of the umpteen proprietors obsequiously present, for a quarter of an hour for sausage and mashed or a two-eyed steak, but discovering that the nearest approach to the desired repast was a dish of maize, raisins and a resemblance of aniseed balls boiled in oil, they departed after tendering the advice that the particular proprietor should be treated in a precisely similar fashion to his indigestible mixture.

They indulged in a donkey ride towards the Muski, leading to the squalid Arab quarters through a whirl of life and scene absolutely unimaginable and illustrative of the germ of Oriental fiction. The donkeys were urged on through a kaleidoscopic interminable crowd of peoples and animals, pedestrians, riders and carts, beggarly description. Jim could not make his ordinary voice heard above the cracking of drivers' whips, the jingling of money on the changers' glass table tops, the rattling of various water-carrying vessels, snorting, gurgling or moaning of camels, braying of donkeys and barking of dogs. When Jim raised his voice he was apt to improve upon the English language, so one or two other features were added to the pandemonium.

Jim and the rest of the lads classified all the un-English occupants of Cairo as "gyppos," mostly Greeks and Italians, Egyptians, Turks, Syrians, Arabs, Armenians, Sudanese, Persians, Hindoos, and one or two other stray types of humanity who may have been natives of Mexico, Lapland or the Fiji Islands, or broken-down tourists, Mecca pilgrims, or sore-eyed mendicants from the Chinee quarter of San

D

Francisco. These latter waifs and strays generally fought for their daily bread and eked out an existence as *dragomans*, window cleaners or cinema attendants, and resided usually in the nearest *karakol* (police-station).

Our pair of thirsters after knowledge and Pilsener were soon arguing with the donkey boy that as the *backsheesh* should be proportionate to the quality of the donkey and behaviour of the donkey boy, it was in their case a negligible quantity, and inasmuch as Arab itinerants invariably demand twenty times the value of articles offered or services rendered, a compromise was no easy matter. Joe explained that they had no desire to purchase the "something" ass, but merely to hire it, but they amicably concluded the contract by paying a fifth of the fee asked plus three cigarettes, and added the gratuitous advice that the Arab should go to a hotter climate. If the boy could have understood "B" Battery English, he would have learnt quite a lot concerning how he was bred and where, and where, *post mortem*, he was destined to journey, and how.

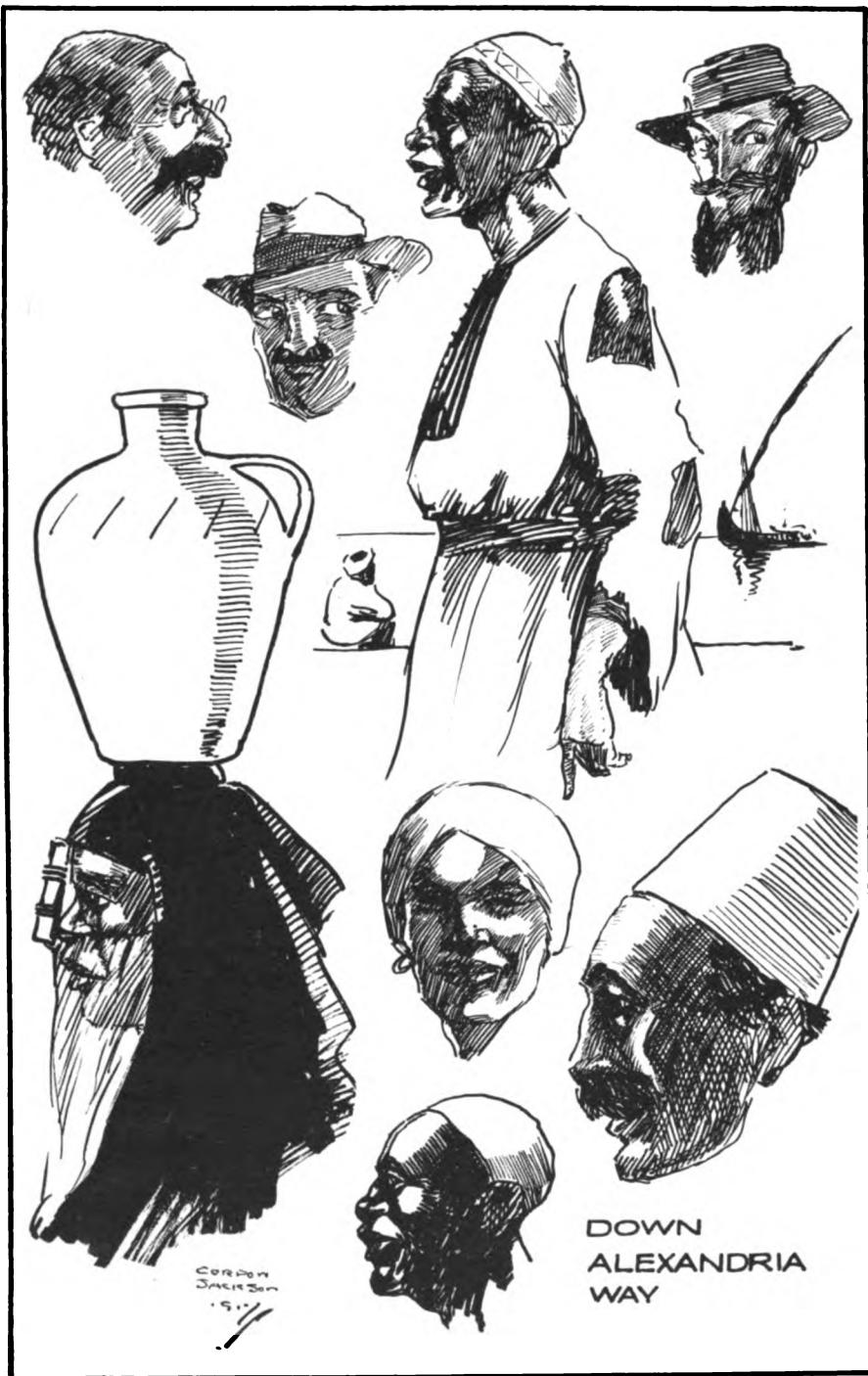
"Ain't yer noticed, Joe, 'ow the toff gyppos about 'ere seem to wear dago 'ats and skirts?"

"Yus; but they ain't proper gyppos, they looks more like the Yids. I suppose it's their Government makes 'em wear the git-up."

The foregoing comments were made in a Cairo *café* anent the "gents of Cairo" who affect a sort of semi-European and semi-Oriental garb, crowned with a red *tarbush* or fez. They congregate at the small tables outside cafés, drinking coffee and liqueurs from exceedingly small cups and glasses, *zibib* (afterwards known as *arak* to the troops up the line) being one of the seductive drinks indulged in. This type of individual is the staple Europeanised man of Egypt, whilst the predominating species of women—not Europeanised—walk about in *yashmaks* with eyelids and eyelashes darkened with *kohl*, and finger and toe nails stained ruddy brown with henna. They also wear one or two other articles of apparel.

Jim and Joe sampled, tested and approved many drinks,





but those retailed in the lower quarters by street beverage vendors did not meet with their unadulterated approval. It was water of doubtful origin flavoured with either liquorice, orange-blossom, raisins, lemons, or, as Joe said, epsom salts and sugar, but was essentially a native infusion for natives, who were welcome to the "blooming lot," *avec le grand plaisir*, commented Jim in his own particular language.

Like unto bits of flotsam, they drifted back to Ezbekiyeh amid the warning shouts of *riglak! riglak!* from the coachmen of the innumerable victorias or garies, donkey attendants, camel drivers, and well-meaning cross-eyed urchins who claimed *backsheesh* as their reward. Whilst on the subject of facial characteristics of this description, mention must be made of the millions or less of beggars whose wares (not meant for sale) are matches and bad eyes ; they are all blind or half-blind and sometimes drunk, and invoke, more often than not unsuccessfully, Allah's blessings on the heads of intending benefactors. They curse non-givers in a plurality of languages.

The garry drivers were a motley crew, and they must have reaped a rich harvest whilst the British were encamped around Cairo, charging exorbitant fares which, as a rule, they were very lucky if they received. The chaise or garry was usually in a most decrepit state only equalled by that of the underfed horse. The harness was commonly tied together with string or bits of bootlace, and it was no uncommon occurrence for the jehu in pulling his animal up suddenly from the gallop—they know no other pace—to somersault backwards into the garry among his astonished fares, a piece of string connecting the bit with the remnants of the rein having given way under the strain.

After having sported a half-piastre each (five were demanded) with a soothsaying fortune-teller, whose spare time was devoted to municipal service, the authorities supplying the broom and shovel, our excursionists made a bee line for the disreputable vice-permeated quarter of the fish-market (El Wasa). Their comments as they departed respecting the

relative attractions of this vicinity and those of a similar neighbourhood around the docks at Marseilles left no doubt that "this 'ere Wazzer fairly takes the 'Untley and Palmer." And it does.

It was lucky that the travellers' money was nearly nappoo or *mafisb*, because Jim developed a great hankering after articles of Arabian woodwork, inlaid work, ivory carvings and numerous Oriental novelties imported from Birmingham and, in the past, Frankfort-on-Main. The Arabian bazaar in Khan-el-Kalili was their special attraction, and one could, down an unobtrusive side alley, watch "genuine antiques" being turned out by the score. But to illustrate their versatile taste in viewing the sights, their next stop was outside the Roman Catholic *Eglise de l'Assomption* in Sharia el Banadki. Possibly Jim or his mate or both were students of universal religions and were out to learn more of the English, French and German Protestant, Orthodox Greek, Roman and Coptic Catholic and Coptic Orthodox Churches situate in Cairo, or maybe it was an intensely violent native argument outside their latest stop which irresistibly arrested their progress, but they dwelt there some considerable time.

As a coincidence, it is really surprising why they attempted to enter the New Synagogue in the Jewish quarters, unless they were still indulging their suppositional ecclesiastical pursuits. The building did not look the least like a *café* or "english beere salon," but if their sect or sex was that of a Talmudist or Karäite, it accounts for the *lait* in the *café-au-lait*, as the natives of Honolulu aptly remark.

The Mosque of Al Azhar is worthy of lengthy description. From a labyrinth of unpaved lanes, trodden into mud by the feet of unending trains of laden donkeys and camels, the curious traveller emerges in a wider space to find himself beside a massive white wall, surmounted by two towering minarets and adorned with flamboyant medallions of blue and gold mosaic.

In space he has put a few hundred yards only between himself and the broad thoroughfares and gay shops of modern

Cairo. In time he has travelled backwards nearly a thousand years.

All around him hums the ancient city of the Caliphs and the "Arabian Nights." He stands at the gate of the world-famous Mosque of Al Azhar—"the most Resplendent"—the most renowned seat of learning of all the Moslem world.

Slipshod with a large pair of loose, formless slippers—for no dirt from the outside world must be brought over the sacred threshold—the traveller enters a wide stone courtyard, as closely thronged and quite as noisy as the crowded streets without. The close press of humanity and the incessant tumult recall a crowded day on the Stock Exchange rather than a quiet haunt of learning.

Sitting cross-legged on skin mats on the stone floor, each with his shoes laid sole to sole beside him, are some hundreds of students in flowing robes and turbans, grouped round a score of bearded sheikhs—sitting literally "at the feet" of their Gamaliels.

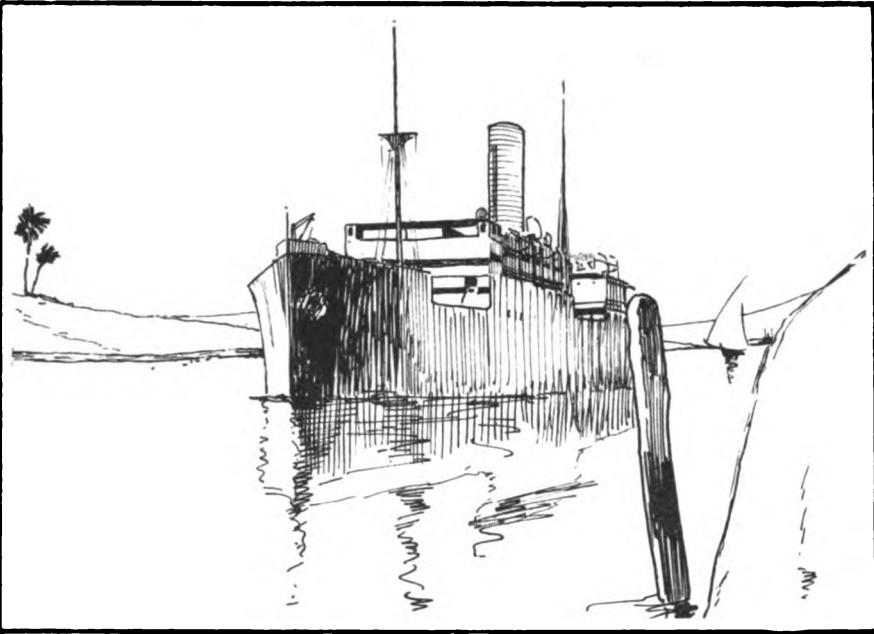
They hail from all quarters of the Moslem world. There are black Sudanese, fair-headed Moors, swarthy Arabs; even Malays and yellow men from Java. Each race possesses its own "common room" in the shape of a small arcade opening off the great courtyard. Above are the dormitories where the students sleep. In the courtyard itself and a great colonnade of 380 columns beyond it—with intervals marked by the shadow of a great sundial and sonorously hailed with resonant calls to prayer from Muezzins on the balconies of the twin minarets—the wheel of classes and lectures turns incessantly, with a din that reproduces Babel.

Some groups follow the explanations of a lecturer who is working out long-division sums in Arabic figures on a black-board. Others listen to an instructor who is reading history aloud in a monotonous sing-song. Here and there groups of students sway their bodies backwards and forwards, as if in pain or frenzy, while they chant—and so commit to memory—passages from the Koran. Such exercise is the time-honoured accompaniment of Moslem studies. Its object is the simple

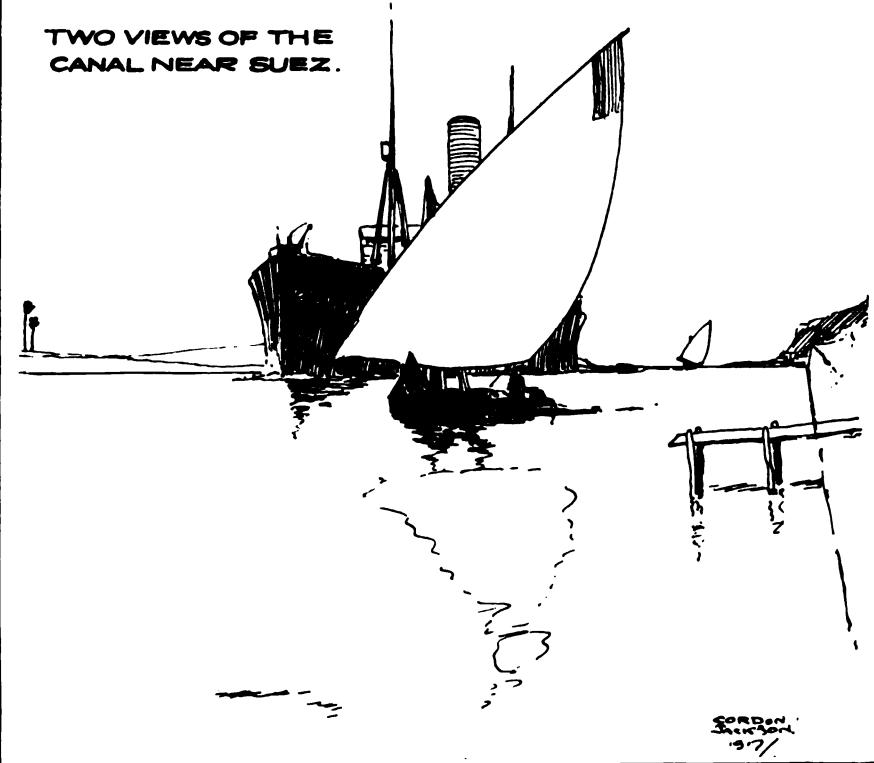
one of concentrating the scholar's errant thoughts by keeping him awake.

Al Azhar offers no scholarships and gives no prizes. It plays no games and indulges no sports. Its professors are unpaid and its pupils are charged no fees. Poor scholars, indeed, receive not only free tuition, but also free quarters and rations from its ample funds, which at present amount to about £30,000 a year, together with a daily revenue in kind of 25,000 loaves of bread.





TWO VIEWS OF THE  
CANAL NEAR SUEZ.



## CHAPTER IV

### AYÛN MUSA—MOASCAR

April 5, 1916—January 31, 1917

ON the evening of April 4 the 271st Brigade entrained at Cairo for El Kubri, a post on the Canal some miles above Suez, *en route* for Ayûn Musa (Moses' Wells), a collection of wells in a cluster of date palms about twelve miles from Suez, along the coast of the Sinai Peninsula. This oasis is biblically recorded under the name Marah, as a halting point of Moses and followers in their flight from Egypt.

The G.O.C. Forces in Egypt had taken advantage of Moses' kindly act of sweetening the bitter waters of the Marah district with a branch or two of an accommodating tree, by forming an outpost at Ayûn Musa and utilising the "twelve fountains," and it was to this oasis in Sinai that our Battery was journeying.

The first part of the march from El Kubri to El Shatt was fairly easy going, the desert being flat and the track firm, following the line of the Canal until opposite Suez and Port Tewfik. The direction then turned into the desert, and soon very deep sand was encountered in which the guns and wagons oftentimes sank half-way to their axle-trees, and one vehicle after another came to a standstill. It was a very tiresome journey, and after the weeks of comparative idleness at Cairo tempers were bitter and nerves on edge. One No. 1 opined that had it not been for the broad, flat sandtyres, the guns would have been completely engulfed, "and b—— good luck to 'em," because he did not intend to exert himself in digging out one of Vickers' masterpieces on the munificent emolument

he was receiving—or words to that effect. Add to the state of the ground a shimmering dry heat approaching 130°, and the hot winds of the khamseen season, parched and tired horses and men, the blinding white glare of the sun pouring down vertically and striking up from the scorching desert, and you have something like the combination of circumstances in which the journey was made. And only a few weeks previously we were stuck in the mud of Flanders, drenched with chilling rain !

The drivers' persuasive abilities were sorely tried, and had it not been for leaving matters entirely in their own hands to urge forward or rest when they thought fit, each team independently, with the gunners manning the wheels, the move would have been more trying and less of a success. The men and beasts understood one another, and the little talks the drivers addressed to their horses whilst wiping away sand from eyes and nostrils were inspired by much greater feeling than a casual observer could have understood.

This feeling is encouraged in the army in every way, even down to letting the men christen their steeds with names of their own choice—generally sentimentally connected with their own personalities. Of course, this observation applies especially to the mares, who often basked in the sunshine of names varying from Lizzie to Ermyntrude ; on state and other occasions variations were introduced, possibly in a torrent of imprecation, according to the driver's degree of irascibility.

The half-humorous type of conversation between drivers is fairly conveyed by the following dialogue reconstructed from fragments recollected.

“I tell yer what,” a diminutive wheel-driver squeezed through a mouthful of bread and marrow pulp labelled “Plum and Apple.” “You blokes 'as got a lot to say about 'osses, but my off-'orse wants a lot of beating.”

“What for ?” sweetly inquired an auburn-haired son of Bethnal Green—“his good looks, as a bit of genuine old Chippendale, or as pussy's fancy on a skewer ?”

“Don't take the mike, Ginger, me ol' son. I reckon there

ain't many faster 'osses in the sub., and chance it! Only yesteray Lieutenant Dash had a 'shack' on it at exercise, and 'e said it were one of the fastest 'e'd rode for a long time."

"Fast!" scornfully exclaimed the said "Ginger." "Why, it ain't fast enough to catch a cold. I 'eerd they was a-pensioning 'im off soon, and it's about time the poor stag got his ticket. 'E ought to been exempted. Class C 3 'im."

"You getting a new horse, Ginger?" queried a voice from the depths.

"'Ullo, another of yer. Who pulled *your* string?"

"Sorry, but seeing that you've got the frame in already, I thought you were getting a new one, you know."

"You needn't shout, 'edge-'og dial; it's about time you 'ad the managin' of a pair of 'osses. 'Osses, I said—not a couple of tramcar commandeer'ds what go to sleep waiting for the ting-a-ling afore they start! Kind of 'osses that goes a long way in a long while youn is."

Such semi-earnest banter always underlies the conversational side of the artillery driver, and apart from the direct humour (if any) it is worth reproducing as evidencing to a small extent the great attachment our lads had for their four-legged pals.

Such an attachment, obviously, is not lacking in good results. It is mutual, so far as can be discerned. It can safely be accepted that if experienced drivers cannot get the work out of a team, no amount of urging by sergeants, coverers and officers will produce better results. Some of the long arduous desert treks through Egypt bore this out. And so with this first desert drag to Moses' Wells. With a great deal of labour, the guns were hauled, a few at a time, the remainder of the distance, about five miles, and in consequence the Battery did not arrive in camp until after sunset, the men and horses completely tired. With the setting of the sun, the temperature dropped considerably, and by the time the destination was reached the air was refreshingly cool.

There were no native inhabitants of the oasis, and the

troops were mainly Sikhs and Ghurkhas, a squadron or so of the Roughriders, "B" Battery of the H.A.C., and our own Battery. Rations and forage reached the post by camel convoy from the Quarantine Station near the coast of the Gulf of Suez, where supplies had been collected by steamer from Port Tewfik.

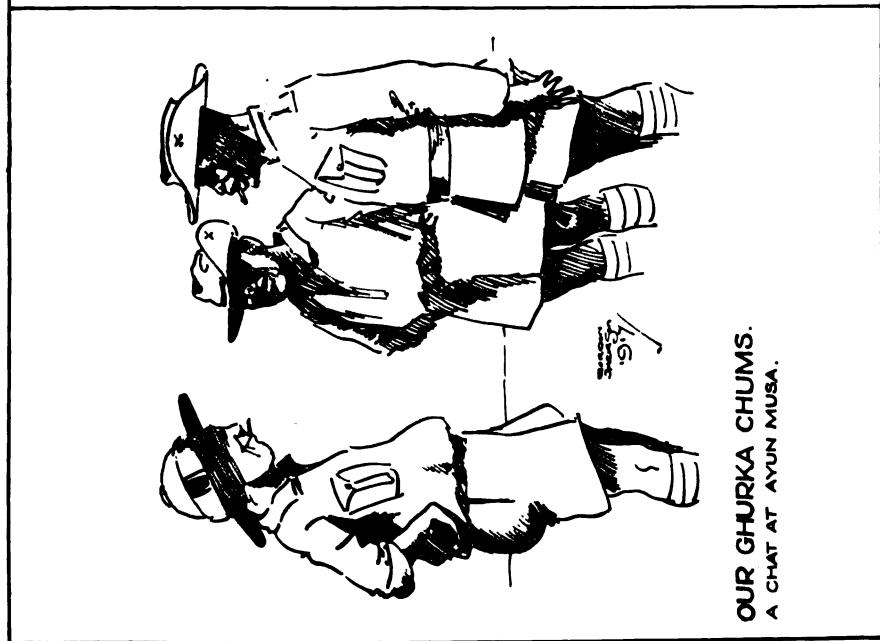
For a time water was obtained from the wells, of which there were a fair number; but most of them were brackish, and the water not of much use for drinking purposes. The horses, in particular, at first steadfastly refused to drink until obliged by extreme thirst, and in consequence soon began to lose condition. In spite of careful economy exercised in the use of water the supply began to run short, and shallow wells had to be sunk to obtain water for purposes other than drinking, in order to conserve the failing supply of fresh water. Eventually, the supply was supplemented by convoys of water camels from the Quarantine Station, each camel carrying eighteen gallons in fantasses (*i.e.* copper tanks). Camels were attached to the Battery for water, forage, etc., and they were indispensable for transport work.

Ayûn Musa was the warmest place the Battery had yet visited, and the occasional khamseens (sirocco), lasting usually three days, made life far from pleasant while they prevailed; a hot, dry gale of wind which made one gasp for breath swamped the camp with sand which it had whipped up in its course over the desert. Sand in food and drink, and caked on face and hands, was aggravated by the perpetual plague of flies and the shortage of water; it drove the men to seek relief in the briny waters of the Gulf of Suez, a two or three miles trudge in deep sand, from which they would return cleaner, but thirstier than ever. From day to day the sun's rays seemed to increase in intensity, pouring down like molten brass, and reflected by the glittering white sand of the desert. This sea of sand took satanic pleasure in thrusting a sickening monochrome ceaselessly before our eyes.

The sand was not even the colour of any decent English



OUR GHURKA CHUMS.  
A CHAT AT AYUN MUSA.





sand. Under the varying lights it assumed different tints on different occasions, and whatever its colour, brilliant or dark, it was nauseating. It exuded monotony, it engendered loneliness, and to us, after desert dwelling for only a few days, it was slow—with qualifications. In fact, desolate Egypt will parade with a huge debit sheet on the day of reckoning.

Monotony and loneliness! But at times glorious withal. Home is absent, life and gaiety missing, and literally the description is true; but silent Nature amply makes amends. Standing in Marah's quiet oasis and grand solitudes, to an impressionable mind the historical associations linger in the atmosphere, and one can mentally picture the Children of Israel breaking their wanderings at such a tranquil haven. The ineffable splendour of the sunset is one to mock at the artist with his paltry oils. Behind a foreground of sage-green palms and faintly bubbling well, with sandy scrub border and reflection of an overhanging mud-dwelling of doubtful age, is visible the rich Mediterranean turquoise of the Suez Gulf, with the rugged background of the Gebel Atqua dimly outlined. Over all hangs a purplish haze, melting away into the hillcrest—a fitting canopy for such a setting. The drab of the intervening desert terrain tones the picture. Such quiet glory begetting meditation does not appeal to all, and with many of us minds dwelt always on the material and tangible in life.

In our canvas camp on the outskirts of the oasis, drinking water would invariably arrive hot, whether it was supplied by camel transport or by a pipe line laid on the surface of the desert, both methods exposing it to the full heat of the sun. The only cold refreshing draught obtainable was that drawn up from one of the deep wells of the oasis, and this supply was unfortunately strictly limited. Consequently, nearly all the drinking water was used for making tea, of which refreshing beverage huge quantities were drunk without any apparent ill effect.

A period of nearly two months was mainly spent in surveying the surrounding desert, and registering the guns on

prominent points in the old caravan track to Akaba. This track was much used by Mohammedan pilgrims to Mecca in the old days, before the opening of the Canal altered the conditions of the pilgrimage. A Turkish force advancing across Sinai from the East, with the intention of securing the Suez Canal and attacking Egypt, would, of necessity, owing to the arid nature of the Peninsula, be compelled to use either this caravan track from Akaba or the old sea road which follows roughly the line of the northern coast. The latter route was by far the most probable, as the water supply, although strictly limited for the requirements of a large force, was more plentiful, and to be found at more frequent intervals, than along the southern route. This caravan route boasted only one large supply between the wells of Ayûn Musa and the town of Akaba—that stored in the reservoirs of Nekyl, approximately midway, a three or four days' march over absolute waterless desert from whichever direction approached. However unlikely, the possibility of an attack along this line by an enemy raiding force had to be guarded against, more especially as it was reported that German engineers were busily engaged in the construction of a railway connecting Akaba and Nekyl.

The various units at this post were kept busy working, reconnoitring, and preparing for any such eventualities. Groups of Yeomanry went out for two or three days at a time, and often returned with one or two casualties owing to collisions with roving bands of Arabs among the immense dunes miles out in the desert. A punitive Ghurkha expedition was despatched on April 23 against the venturesome enemy. Bedouins were probably the particular species which had to be faced, but it is quite possible that other tribes were represented at the little family gatherings fomented and organised for Great Britain's benefit; Senussis (particularly out in Western Egypt at Sollum), Dervishes, Beni-Famins, Makusis, or other tribes may each have obliged by a short appearance at divers times, garbed in flowing white robes and saturnine countenances. The Sheikhs in this

real life were a little different from those played for the movies by the Hollywood heros. As these bands spent their spare time running a shoot with the Yeomanry as an unconscious quarry, in conjunction with an application of primitive surgery and mutilation to any unfortunate wounded left behind—this as a kind of side show—it was considered rather a good idea to curtail their activities.

For our part, we had little opportunity of slinging about any of our "18-pr. Q.F. Shrapnel-filled Mark IV," and plastering the hills with some of Britain's best, just specified, all the way from Pittsburg, Pa., U.S.A. It seems as if our special mission in life was to shift and adjust the desert to make it fit the somewhat vague maps supplied. In such a barren featureless land, a blank sheet of paper, neatly printed with inch squares, plus one or two triangulation marks, served the purpose of a map; but by dint of post-planting, cairn-building and so forth, we managed to add one or two other permanent spots to the map.

The Battery staff which was engaged in this survey was out daily at about 4 o'clock in the morning, and members of this staff will no doubt remember the jaunts from Extension Point to Point 198 and Point 153, from which bearings were taken backwards and forwards, sideways and upwards, and the data religiously jotted down on pieces of paper which were never afterwards looked at—well, hardly ever. But we did, at least, draw out the contours of the large rise christened by ourselves Camel's Hump.

With the aid only of a solitary instrument, the Artillery-director, and all the signalling flags the staff possessed, we succeeded in marking the "50" contour ring on the map, after two weeks solid work! And if, on the actual Hump, the ends of the circle (planned out by spare men—with twenty-four hours' rations, posts, and signalling flags, by helio from Extension Point) did fail to align, one having crept up even above the "60" mark, what did it matter? We were only Artillery anyhow, not Ordnance Survey men, and—well, one can't build a locomotive with a screwdriver.

Some of the other treks into the desert to places farther afoot, even past Bir Mabieuk, involved real hardship. Getting lost miles out in the lonely desert, in the midday furnace, waterless and parched, was no joke, and the solitary parties of twos and threes sent out to become acquainted with more of the "country" soon learnt the value of the two water-bottles apiece they carried, containing warm chlorinated muck which was cool crystal nectar to parched lips. Especially the last drip at the bottom of the bottle.

Perhaps apologies should be offered for reproducing the following desert incident recounted by one of the Battery staff, as its only recommendation is that it gives an idea of the sun and its tragic effect, and affords a relief from the banal daily routine with which this volume is loaded. But having been handed on to the chroniclers as authentic, the chief actor will be allowed to use his own words, bathos and all—merely changing names.

\* \* \* \*

It was on a broiling afternoon away in an unsurveyed part of Egypt's expanse of sand, whilst our party was engaged in the type of work recorded above, that the following regrettable incident occurred. The hot southerly winds penetrated our drill tunics, and combining with a scorching sun seemed to dry up every particle of moisture in our systems.

I don't know whether I was highly strung to the point of nerve collapse, or whether the blinding glare and heat had temporarily affected my brain, but I do know that I was scarcely normal when Corporal Carstairs and myself sat together on that solitary spot of a wide expanse of shimmering desert.

Carstairs was dozing by my side, back propped against a small dune, and I was musing in a morbid strain. I recall how I cursed the fates which had flung Carstairs and me together at this tense palpitant moment. Would to Heaven that I had never met him; perhaps then the opportunity

THE ORANGE  
SELLER.



"STICK, JOHNNY".



A NATIVE FUNERAL.



A 'GENT OF CAIRO'



for so contemptible an action so temptingly thrust before me would never have occurred.

Opportunity ! Ye gods ! As we sat there amidst the Libyan solitude with parched throats and aching temples, my soul seemed to be wrenched, carrying away the last scruples of conscience. I silently contemplated my chum, and I am certain a sardonic leer spread across my face as I studied Carstairs' peaceful features.

I quietly bent down and carefully moved the tin with its precious contents towards my feet. Unconsciously I fingered the dangerous looking jack-knife lying in the sandy scrub at my side. A lizard darted away, and I gave a guilty start. My nerves were all on edge. Not that the consequences appalled me, but some inner promptings seemed to deter me in my action—and I paused.

Carstairs stirred and muttered uneasily, and all of a sudden, awakening with a sigh, he perceived the tin and knife in my hands, and must have instantly guessed my intentions.

He exclaimed, with the hoarseness following sleep :

“Ere, drop it. You’ve ‘ad your tea ! D’you want to pinch all the bloomin’ pozzie ? Chuck it over, and don’t come it !!”

In the face of such an imperious request, I meekly handed back the tin of jam ; I hadn’t the heart to rob a comrade of his due ration. Such temptations as these are only too frequently flung across one’s path, and I am pleased to say, now, I was checked in time, as we sat that day on the fringe of our unit assembled for tea.

\* \* \* \*

During our stay at Ayün Musa continual rumours were prevalent of the tremendous things which were to happen in the near future. Whatever they were, they all coincided on one point, viz. the E.E.F. was to concentrate and move easterly, and we were going to capture Palestine. After that, ideas were more ambitious and divergent ; in fact, one extravagant tale carried us past Gaza and Jerusalem, thence northwards through Damascus to Aleppo ; by that time the

Turkish army would have been annihilated, and Germany on the point of capitulation. Events showed that there was indeed some measure of truth in this prediction.

The great "Stunt" was pending, and signs were numerous that preparations were afoot, but as a matter of fact, as will be seen, actualities did not occur until nearly a year later.

Our stay at this post drew to a close on May 27, just previously to which a field day of firing practice was held. The move was a short one back to El Shatt on the Canal, in which neighbourhood we stayed many months.

About this time, El Arish, an important post on the line of communication between Egypt and Syria, and quite near Gaza, was bombarded by British warships and aircraft. This town, it was understood, was being developed as an advanced aircraft base by the enemy. This has particular significance, as at our new home of El Shatt we were to receive our first taste of enemy aircraft in the East.

El Shatt was a large encampment on the banks of the Canal immediately opposite Suez, where good water was plentiful. Camp equipment and stores of all sorts had accumulated since the arrival of the Battery in Ayûn Musa, and a convoy of over forty transport camels was required to move us to the new camp, a distance of seven miles. Here gunpits were dug in the banks of the Canal, and other defensive preparations made to repel an attack.

Whilst at El Shatt the Battery sustained its first casualties due to enemy action. Early on the morning of July 20 two enemy aeroplanes arrived over the camp, flying at a good height, and proceeded to drop bombs both on the camp and Port Tewfik opposite. One bomb fell close to our guard tent, severely wounding the N.C.O., Bombardier Warren, and four gunners on duty. An infantryman, committed to the custody of the guard the previous evening, alone escaped injury. Two or three bombs also fell in the camel lines close to the camp, thirty-two camels being killed or so badly injured that they had to be destroyed. In addition, seven men were wounded in other batteries (including three natives), and one

man killed, and ten horses destroyed. Other air raids this week were not so successful to the enemy, but certainly made an eventful few days ; it was the same week that Captain Fryatt of the G.E.R. steamer *Bruselas* was shot by the Germans.

One of the many duties which devolved on Battery officers at El Shatt was the patrolling at dawn each day of a section of the "swept track" between Baluchistan Post and the camp. This track was swept at sunset each evening by a team of horses hauling a heavy sweep, which smoothed the surface of the fine soft sand, obliterating all footprints and other markings. The track was sufficiently wide to make it impossible for anyone to cross in the night without leaving a tell-tale track as evidence. The possibility of an attempt to blow up a vessel by introducing a mine in the narrow canal, and thus effectually block it for traffic with the East for a considerable period, had to be carefully guarded against, and the swept track was one means of detecting whether anyone on mischief bent had crossed during the night. No vessels were allowed to pass through the Canal until the whole track had been patrolled and reported all clear.

The Turks about this period evinced considerable interest in the activities of Port Tewfik (Suez) ; bombing raids by Taube aeroplanes, from a base somewhere in Palestine (probably El Arish), became fairly frequent. The only anti-aircraft guns were those mounted on the monitors lying off Port Tewfik, so one of our 18-pounders was mounted on a special platform with a circular depression for a sunk trail, and pressed into service as an anti-aircraft gun, and a permanent lookout man was posted to give warning of the approach of hostile aircraft.

In many respects El Shatt camp was one of the pleasantest camps (as a desert or outpost camp) which the Battery occupied during the war. Suez was easily accessible by steamer, stores of all kinds were plentiful, whilst good bathing was to be had in the Canal, on the banks of which the tents were pitched. Also, although the heat was at times almost

overpowering, it was not so liable to sandstorms as was Ayûn Musa, and conditions generally were more endurable.

On August 23 we lost the services of the late Lieut. Gordon Hill, who obtained his transfer to the R.A.M.C. He had become endeared to the unit by his kindly interest, large-hearted enthusiasm, and his "personal" touch, both during training and in recreation hours, and the boys were very sorry to bid him adieu. Like our Commanding Officer of this date (the late Major R. A. Hatton, D.S.O.), and many others, he went farther and fared worse, passing to the Great Unknown in France.

On November 11 "B" Battery relieved "C" Battery on outpost duty at El Shatt Railhead and Gebel Mur. A light railway had been laid down from El Shatt a distance of about five miles into the desert, and a dump of ammunition and supplies established for the use of the force defending the outposts at Gebel Mur and Bir Mabieuk.

One section of the Battery remained at Railhead, the other occupying Gebel Mur, a rocky and comparatively high hill covering Bir Mabieuk and the ancient caravan track already mentioned, crossing the desert to Arabia, and the highway to Nekyl, a considerable Arab town beyond the range of mountains which runs through the Peninsula of Sinai, culminating in the south with Mount Sinai. The Turks were using Nekyl as an advanced base of operations directed against Suez and Egypt.

At Bir Mabieuk was an important supply of fresh water, which in this dry country was of utmost importance to a force intending to attack on this front. It was held mainly by Indian troops—principally Ghurkhas. The surrounding country consisted of illimitable desert extending farther than the eye could see, except towards the Canal, in which direction Suez could be seen, and here and there in the distance green patches of cultivation or clumps of palm-trees, with the rugged reddish granite crags of the Atqua mountains far away in the distant background. Large steamers passing through the Canal appeared enormous when viewed from the desert,

apparently steaming smoothly over a sandy plain, for the Canal itself was hidden. In every other direction stretched the desert—a waste of sand heaped up by the winds into considerable hills or dunes of fantastic shape. The ridges of piled up sand with the otherwise smooth slopes delicately rippled by the breezes (except where here and there the surface was broken by the deep tracks of horses and camels) extended for miles. The clear-cut edges followed graceful curves, here forming a deep cup-like depression, there rounding a bend with an almost perpendicular wall and a drop of a hundred feet more or less to the bottom. All these immense contours were formed, and were continually being refashioned, according to the caprice of the prevailing strong winds. Such was the country in which the Battery found itself, a veritable jumble of sand-dunes, in the secluded troughs upon which the Libyan sun poured down with fierce intensity. Only an Arab, bred and born to the desert, could hope to thread a way through this maze without the aid of modern instruments.

Whilst in occupation of these El Shatt outposts all the more prominent sandhills towards the front were suitably capped with cairns of stones, and these points registered for future use, if required. In this, were we not following in the footsteps of mightier men, for are not the Pyramids cairns? Can there be anything in Egypt's atmosphere, peculiar to the vast open spaces of the desert, which impels man to pile stones one upon another in the form of cairns?

On the occasion of one of the periodical air-raids on Port Tewfik, the enemy planes, when returning, came within range of the Railhead section's improvised anti-aircraft gun, which promptly opened fire, the gunners enthusiastically pursuing them with shell, which, it must be confessed, were not very effective. The activities of the anti-aircraft detachment were brought to an abrupt but timely end by the receipt of a somewhat curt message over the telephone from the officer commanding the advanced section at Gebel Mur, to the effect that if Railhead persisted in shelling his position, he

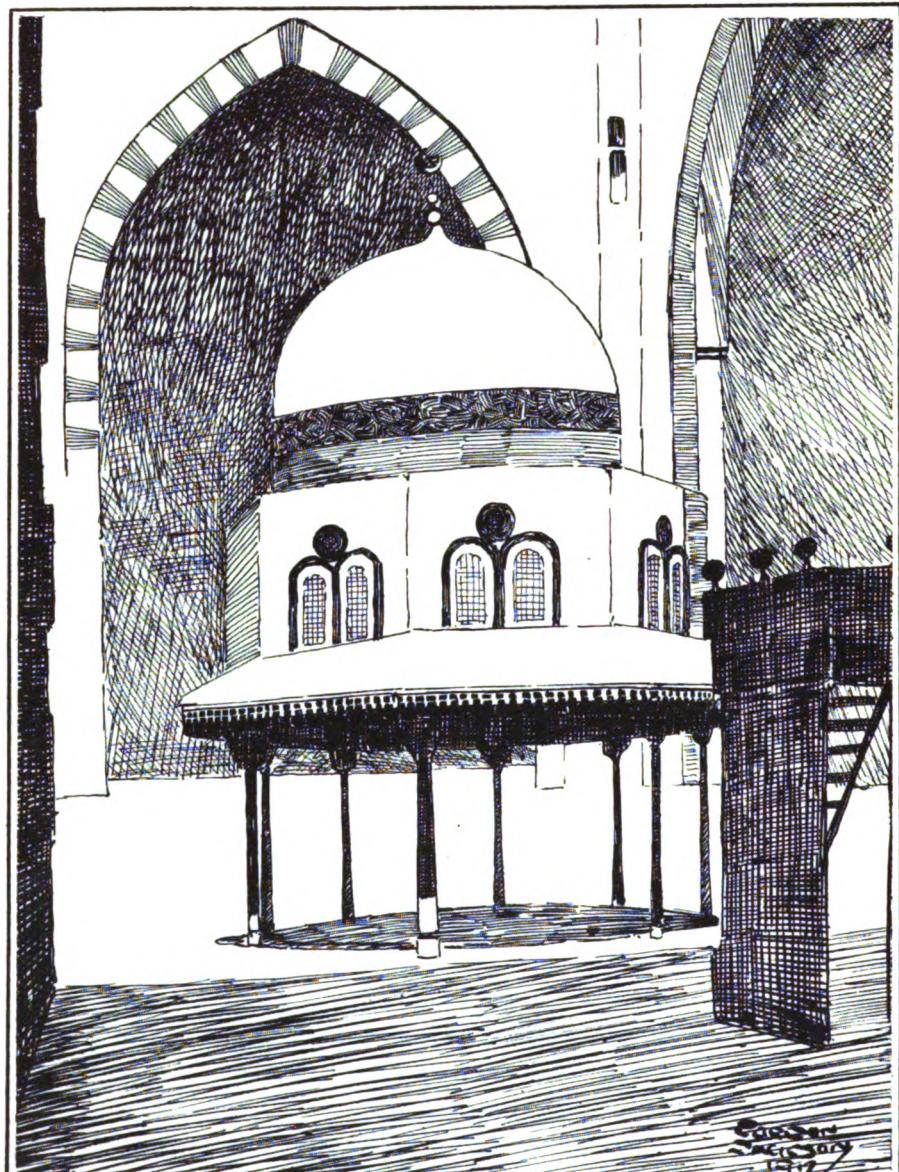
would have no alternative but to retaliate. It transpired that in the excitement of the moment Railhead had been giving its own advanced section a pretty warm time.

On December 21 the Battery, which hitherto had mustered four guns only, was reorganised as a six-gun Battery, receiving the additional section from "C" Battery.

At the approach of Christmas, 1916, as on previous occasions, every effort was made to ensure that the festive occasion should be celebrated in accordance with established custom, as far as was possible under the conditions of active service. The Battery Quartermaster Sergeant was charged to procure turkeys and other stores from Suez. In due course these arrived, but the birds were rather miserable specimens of their species. One had died *en route* as the result of idle curiosity in poking its head through the crate as another crate was in the act of being loaded on top. Two days later another died unaccountably (the Q.M.S. suggested it was grief for its pre-deceased relative); the following day a third was found dead (on a dish in the Sergeants' Mess), and thereafter they died at the rate of about one a day, until at last there were only a few survivors. As there was still about a week to go before Xmas, there was every chance of the grand dinner vanishing into thin air before the day, so the Q.M.S. was again hustled off to Suez with the remnants, both dead and alive, instructed to procure by fair means or *foul* birds of stronger constitution in exchange. He returned in the evening with a number of ducks and small geese, which, by some mysterious methods of persuasion, he had induced the wily native poulterer to part with in exchange for the turkeys. He probably threw in half the week's fag issue; our "Quarters"—the renowned "Wally Pip"—was an undoubted expert at obtaining by bartering and otherwise. Aided by a liberal supply of Japanese beer, the Xmas dinner proved to be a great success.

A few days later the low-lying desert surrounding Railhead was suddenly flooded by torrents of water rushing down the wadis from the distant range of mountains.





INSIDE EL AZHAR MOSQUE, CAIRO.

Although very little rain falls on the desert, and the deep wadis or watercourses are absolutely dry for eleven months out of the twelve, the high hills of the interior break up the storm clouds with consequent heavy downpours of rain, the water rushing torrentially through the wadis to the sea. So strong were the floods that the railway was considerably damaged, the foundation being undermined and sections completely washed away, whilst nearly all the camps were flooded out, necessitating a removal to higher ground in the middle of the night at very short notice. We ourselves were fortunate in having selected an elevated position on which to pitch camp, as we were very soon isolated by the water all round. The flood subsided almost as quickly as it had gathered, and a few days later only the damage it had wrought was left as evidence of its passage. An enjoyable incident during the flood was caused by the arrival of a Lena Ashwell Concert Party, the lady members of which had to be carried between the marquee and their cars by willing troops.

On the afternoon of January 8, 1917, orders were received to march at once back to El Shatt, an order which was not unexpected, as rumours had been circulating for some time about a possible expedition into Palestine, in which the Battery was to be included. We arrived from Railhead in the evening and bivouacked for the night.

Leaving El Shatt at 5.30 the next morning, the Battery marched to Kubri, the post at which it had detrained nearly a year before. Travelling on the military road, and having done more than half the journey, the column was obliged to turn back an appreciable distance, and strike off across the desert in order to skirt flooded country. The deep wet sand made the hauling of guns and wagons very tedious and exhausting for both men and horses, man-handled drag-ropes being much in evidence. Kubri was reached at 9.15 A.M., and, crossing the military pontoon bridge, the Battery entrained for Moascar, near the Canal, arriving there about 3.30 P.M., where it detrained and camped.

Moascar was a large encampment on the edge of the

desert, a mile or so from Ismailia, and close to the Sweet Water Canal which runs practically parallel to the Suez. On the arrival of the Battery it was occupied by a large number of troops from various parts of the Empire, who were being equipped and organised to form part of the famous and—in some ways—ill-fated expedition known as the Desert Column, which was destined to fight its way through the practically waterless desert of Sinai into Palestine, where many thousands were to lose their lives in the battles before Gaza. The total strength of the Battery at this time was 179 officers and men and 173 horses. The water and transport camels were left behind at El Shatt.

Whilst at Moascar the Battery was re-equipped with stores and the hundred and one odds and ends necessary to bring it up to fighting efficiency as a field battery on active service, and with a view to the special conditions of Egypt, and possibly Palestine. "Pedrails" were issued for use on the tyres of guns and wagons to prevent them sinking in the deep sand. This contrivance consisted of a number of peds or blocks of wood about ten inches square, connected by flanges of metal to endless chains, one on each side of the wheel, and so arranged that as the wheel revolved they automatically assumed a flat position as they approached the ground, thus distributing the weight of the vehicle over a wide surface. Also specially long draught-bars were made and fitted to the limbers, so as to enable four horses to be in draught abreast, instead of the usual pair, so that twelve-horse teams could be employed.

On January 26 Divisional manœuvres were held on the desert—the site of the Battle of Tel el Kebir—an occasion which afforded an opportunity of testing the efficiency of both bars and pedrails. The latter proved to be a continual source of annoyance owing to breakages of chains, with the result that the whole contrivance fell off the wheels. A stronger pattern which was subsequently issued was completely satisfactory, being indispensable on the long march over the desert to Palestine.

## CHAPTER V

### ON TO GAZA (INCLUDING THE FIRST BATTLE)

January 31, 1917—March 28, 1917

THE twenty-second dynasty of ancient Egypt witnessed the rising of one surnamed Shishak, sometime Sheshonk (or, to be ultra precise, Hatchkhepperra Shashank), who, as king, led an Egyptian army comprising twelve hundred chariots, sixty thousand horse, and footmen “without number” towards Palestine against Solomon’s son Rehoboam. Shishak’s march was a triumphal progress, and notwithstanding Rehoboam’s defence, in an incredibly short space of time Shishak appeared before Jerusalem.

Now, in the present day, having passed on to the third, fourth, and *n*th generations out of Egypt’s very own dynastic period, we perceive huge armies under British generals advancing from Egypt *via* Kantara to Palestine. Verily, history repeats itself!

Leaving Moascar Camp on January 31, 1917, the 271st Brigade marched to El Ferdan, on the Sweet Water Canal, and bivouacked for the night. Next day, marching by way of Ballah, Kantara was reached, and, crossing the Suez Canal by the pontoon bridge, we bivouacked on the Sinai bank.

Kantara was at this period comparatively a small camp, clusters of tents scattered here and there, with camel and horse lines, and a few parks of guns and wagons. By the middle of the year 1918, as the Base of the Army in Palestine, it had grown to such a tremendous extent as to be a veritable city of canvas, hutments and reinforced concrete, wide, well-

made roads dividing the various camps. In addition, it had become the large terminus for the railway to Palestine, with numerous sidings, platforms, and workshops. In short, it was as if a London terminus, minus the roof and decorative work, had been transported to the banks of the Suez Canal in the short space of a year or so.

One section of the Battery was left behind at Kantara as a Depôt Section. The remainder resumed the march at 9 o'clock in the morning of February 2, and the Brigade reached El Gilban, a short march of about eleven miles. So far the going was fairly good, and the column had covered the thirty-six or so miles from Moascar very comfortably, but from El Gilban onwards the sand was very deep and loose. The ages old caravan track to Palestine, upon which the Brigade was marching (the identical route taken by all the great historical invaders of Egypt from Syria and Syria from Egypt) was divided into irregular stages by the wells of fresh water, and these oases consequently governed the length of each day's march.

On arrival at El Gilban, pedrails and draught-bars, which had so far not been required, were fitted to the vehicles in readiness for the morrow. The weather was good for marching, but although warm by day the nights were very cold, cloaks and the one blanket allowed being insufficient to keep out the cutting north-west wind which blew in from the sea.

Starting at 9 o'clock the next morning, the 3rd, the Brigade left the fairly hard track and cut off across the desert. Although using twelve-horse teams to pull the guns and wagons, four horses abreast with a driver mounted on each of the outside horses, and pedrails on the wheels, the going was very heavy and progress slow. We arrived at Pelusium in the afternoon, and bivouacked.

Next day Romani was reached, a short stage of only seven miles, but the route lay through such difficult country that it took the Battery over eleven hours to do the distance. The water supply was nearly two miles away from the bivouac

area, and was drawn from a number of wells situate in a grove of date palms at the foot of Katib Gannet, a high sand-hill, known to the British troops as Ransome's Mount. This hill had been the scene of some stiff fighting in the recent battle of Romani. Bodies of men, horses, and camels, partially disinterred by the winds from their shallow sandy graves, lay scattered as evidence of the severity of the engagement. The water was plentiful, but very brackish, and stank horribly, and the majority of the horses would drink only a small quantity. Drinking water for the men was sent up from the Base to each halting-place by train in large tanks.

The railway had already been laid to a little beyond Romani, and was being pushed forward rapidly each day in spite of extraordinary difficulties. Frequent sandstorms would block the line with sand drifts, which would have to be shovelled away before the railway could be used again. In conjunction with the railway, a water-pipe line was laid, through which the filtered waters of the Nile were eventually pumped out to the troops, even, later on, as far as Gaza and Beersheba, a distance of approximately 150 miles ; and, after the defeat of the Turks at Gaza, to Jerusalem, thus fulfilling the ancient Arab prophecy, that when the Nile flowed into Palestine, the prophet (Al Nebi) from the west would drive the Turk from Jerusalem.

Apropos of this railway in the wilderness, no surer indication of the magnitude and wonder of a desert campaign of the present day can be gleaned than from a comparative study of ancient parallels. And, to say the least, great interest must be aroused in harking back to the various Egyptian dynasties, and observing how thoroughly and minutely schemes in the latest war in and around Egypt followed the warring plans of the ancients. But the colossal requirements of modern warfare, with the stupendous aggregation of detail incidental to a campaign in the desert, cause a new note to be struck, and a review collaterally of the ancient and modern happenings brings to the fore most vividly the marvels which are now performed.

How commonplace and uninteresting to the home public must have appeared the usual run of official communiqués. Yet, what stirring and wondrous accomplishments are wrapped up in the scant wording ! To quote one of Reuter's to hand at the moment anent the Turkish defeat at Gaza (we are a little in front of ourselves, but the trek now being described leads to it) :

THE GAZA VICTORY—IMPORTANCE OF ITS RESULTS

*London, Friday.*

The brilliant victory is hailed as opening up the prospect of ejecting the Turks from the whole of Palestine. The progress of the British is largely due to the remarkable construction of roads and railways in the desert. When the enemy was crushed at Romani in August last, Romani was the Railhead. It now appears that the railway has been carried one hundred miles further east. This victory indirectly supports the British from Baghdad and the Russians from Kermanshah, and makes Egypt absolutely secure, while it is a lesson taught to the Turks that will resound throughout the East.—*Reuter's Special Service.*

Now, in the 18th Dynasty, Thothmes III, almost certainly following the Kantara-Romani-El Arish route, marched to Syria, and in a short time reached Gaza, "the strong Philistine city, which was already a fortress of repute, and regarded as the key of Syria." Of course, if one were to imagine the army of Thothmes equipped with the heavy artillery, the mass of stores, rations and medical supplies, and the engineering contrivances which are comprised in the battle machine of to-day, one must naturally pre-suppose its ability to transport matériel and to build up and maintain communications—the important factor in present-day strategy. But the fact remains that the G.O.C. completely emulated Thothmes and surmounted the immense difficulties introduced by later innovations.

And here the full import and meaning of the foregoing communiqué can be appreciated. Reverting again to history, the sole problem was the mobility of chariots, horse, and footmen, and the continuous supply of rations (possibly no

more than an adequate amount of bread, wine, honey, fruit, corn and water). In fact, the composition of such an army is often referred to in the Bible. When King Shishak in the 22nd Dynasty invaded Judæa, he levied a force of twelve hundred chariots, three-score thousand horsemen, and footmen "without number" (2 Chron. xii 3), and advanced into the Holy Land against Solomon's son, Rehoboam. There was some sort of organised resistance to Shishak's progress, including the fortification of many cities, among which are Bethlehem and Hebron (2 Chron. xi 6-10), but these succumbed to Shishak's irresistible advance.

Again history was reflected, and the British forces, like Shishak's hosts, triumphed everywhere on the fringe of Palestine. It was, however, at the cost of gigantic engineering feats, and the Royal Engineers department of the army proved its incalculable worth. Remark the following part of Reuter's report: "The progress of the British is largely due to the remarkable construction of roads and railways in the desert . . . . the railway has been carried one hundred miles further east." Pause and consider what the constructive work involved. Across more than a hundred miles of swampy desert and desolate waste, a full-gauge railway track had been laid. At various points could be witnessed sidings, shuntings and loadings, traffic departments and control arrangements equal in efficiency to those found in civil systems, albeit the Railhead was under the very nose of the enemy. Panting engines with their heavily loaded goods trucks left the base at all hours; food, forage, clothes, ammunition and armaments were poured into the firing line miles away across the desert, a regular scheduled service was maintained, and splendidly equipped ambulance trains relieved the casualty clearing stations of the battered, and conducted them across the barren wilderness miles away to the quietude of base hospitals. Withal, the conveyance of thousands of prisoners from the seat of action had to be arranged for.

But it is an anomaly that in the midst of all this modern ordered bustle and present-day activity, the atmosphere of

Biblical history was evident. The train wound for hours up and down large gentle sand dunes, and in and out of wadis in dismal, yet splendid, isolation ; palm groves and oases appeared and disappeared at infrequent intervals. The train stopped while a heterogeneous group of picturesque natives of the Egyptian Labour Corps removed from the lines the result of a sand drift. A camel caravan could be dimly discerned on a far crest. No great imagination was needed to visualise mentally the old Egyptian warriors journeying across the same ground.

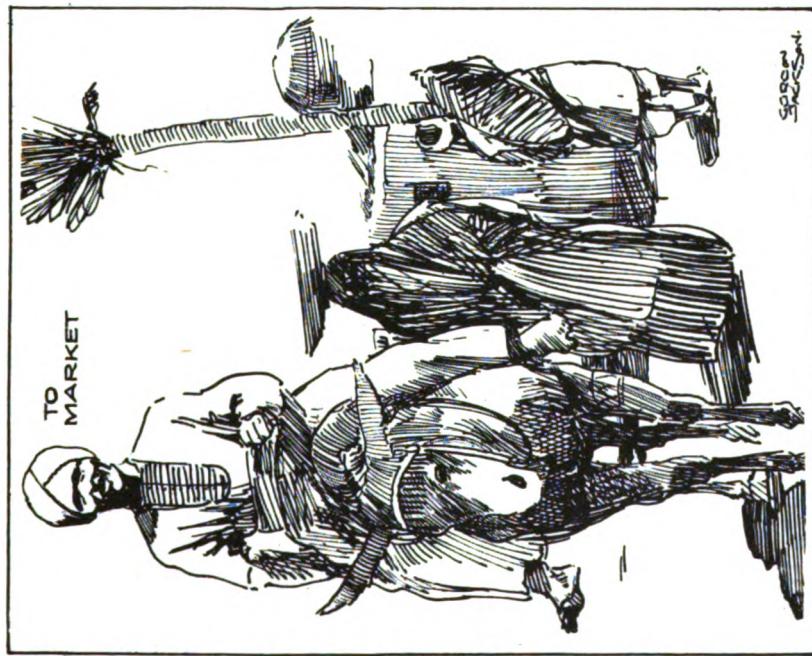
And yet—a full-gauge railway ! !

Even amid the medley of battle, bursting of shells, and the indescribable noises of an action, was heard the resonating clang of hammer and anvil, the metallic clatter of rail lengths being unloaded, and the screech of engine whistles. Yes, in the cold print of an official communiqué, “the railroad is being advanced.”

Such necessary work did not trouble Thothmes III, Shishak or Rehoboam. It seems as if we were deliberately following the trend of olden time movements. Though the ancients did not experience the need for such thoroughly organised transporting, there is a statement in the nature of a prophecy by Isaiah (Isaiah xix 23) : “In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria . . . ” Did Isaiah foresee a railway as so admirably carried out by our forces in Egypt ?

But our narrative is over-running itself. At the present date of our Record (February 1917) the “highway” had not developed to such an extent, nor was it so far advanced.

After five quiet days spent at Romani the march was continued on February 10, with seventeen camels attached to the Battery for water and food. Leaving camp about 2 o’clock in the afternoon, we marched to a post called Rabat, which was encircled by groves of date palms, and possessed an abundant supply of water, although of the usual brackish nature. We bivouacked in the evening as it was getting





dark, and during the night rain fell heavily, and the troops received a soaking.

Starting at 1 o'clock the next day, the Brigade trekked on a distance of six or seven miles over much more open country to Khirba Post, again bivouacking. The weather had been threatening all the afternoon, and during the night a heavy thunderstorm broke over the camp, with the result that the troops received another drenching. Wet through and shivering, the Battery marched on the next morning (February 12) to a large post named Dir-el-Abd, having done about six miles over fairly open desert, but with very heavy pulling. Again a heavy thunderstorm gave of its displeasures during the evening, and for the third night in succession the men were drenched, in addition to which their late meal was spoilt, the stewed bully being washed overboard or swamped with wet sand, and the lobster mayonnaise was hopelessly soaked.

Leaving Dir-el-Abd at about midday the next day, the Brigade marched on and arrived at a well in the early afternoon, close to which preparations were made to spend the night. Horses were unharnessed and had commenced to water—a very slow operation, as the troughs, which were always carried with the baggage on the camels, had first to be fixed up and filled by canvas buckets—when the order was received to harness up again and move on. The march was continued, and a few miles farther on Salmana Post was reached just after sunset.

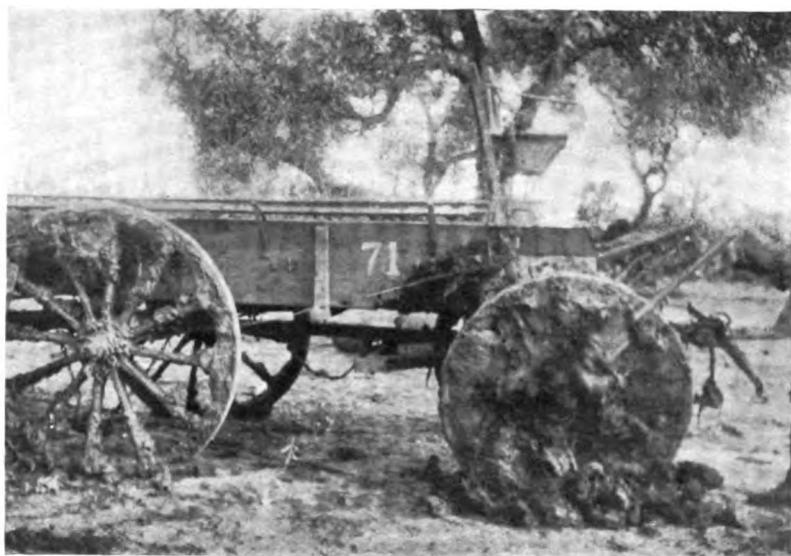
Under a burning hot sun, and an atmosphere most oppressive, the Battery trekked on the next day (14th), and arrived at Telul Post at about 5 o'clock in the afternoon. The last two or three stages of the march were freely scattered with carcases of camels and donkeys, in an advanced stage of decomposition, left by the Turks in their disordered retirement after the defeat at Romani. The stench on a hot, close day was almost overpowering, whilst myriads of filthy disease carrying flies, fresh from the carrion, would swarm upon one's hands and face with maddening persistency.

Resuming the march at 11 o'clock the following morning, the destination, Bir el Mazar, was reached at about 5 o'clock in the evening, the column having travelled eight miles. At first the going was heavy, but for the last three or four miles was good, the route lying through a series of salt pans, perfectly flat, hard plains. The water was plentiful, but brackish. Mazar was a standing camp of fair size, and concluded the second stage of the journey.

The Brigade spent a quiet week at Mazar, a rest which was very welcome to the horses and such gunners as accompanied the Battery, who were obliged to march through the deep sand in order to relieve the teams as much as possible. Parties of gunners also travelled by rail to each halting-place. The Divisional Infantry, whom the Brigade was accompanying, had had a very strenuous time since leaving Kantara. Although the stages were generally short, the difficulty and fatigue of marching over the desert under a hot sun, and carrying kit, rifle and ammunition, made the day's journey equivalent to at least treble the distance, augmented by the scanty supply of drinking water. Over the worst part of the route, however, miles of wire netting had been laid down so as to form roads or tracks, wide enough to take a column of infantry in fours. This device, which was one of the discoveries of the war, considerably lessened the labour of marching. But still, Egypt and its heat, flies and sand was gradually fading behind in the distance, and day by day, like the Israelites, our hands were outstretched to the Promised Land.

Here we will indulge in a little metric digression to relieve the monotony.

If there's sand on either hand,  
Then it's Egypt ;  
Sifted gravel, and no land,  
Sure it's Egypt.  
If a wadi is your billet,  
You must try your best to fill it,  
Find a scorpion—well, kill it,  
'Cause it's Egypt.



MUDDY FRANCE . . . . .



. . . . . SUNNY EGYPT



If flies light on your ration  
 When in Egypt,  
 Do not fly into a passion  
 Out in Egypt ;  
 For 'tis worth not a piastre,  
 You must cool your pepper castor,  
 Calm minds avert disaster  
 Out in Egypt.

There's a sphinx that never winks  
 Out in Egypt ;  
 And a sun that plays high jinks  
 With you in Egypt ;  
 So your temper try and stifle,  
 Keep the grit out of your rifle,  
 For Tommy's but a trifle  
 Out in Egypt.

With the guns you'll go a-tracking  
 Out of Egypt,  
 While the sun your skin is cracking,  
 Oh dear, Egypt ;  
 Bound for Canaan hand in hand,  
 Leaving flies, and sun, and sand,  
 Soon to reach the Promised Land,  
 Good-bye, Egypt !

The third stage was commenced on February 22, and, travelling through salt pans the whole way, the Brigade made good progress to its destination, El Maadan, where it bivouacked for the night. Early in the afternoon of the following day we arrived at Bardawil—a march of about nine miles. Bardawil in the days of the Crusades was a stronghold of Baldwin, King of Jerusalem, brother of the famous Godfrey de Bouillon ; the ruins of the Crusaders' church may still be seen, surrounded by treacherous boggy country, which probably in those days formed an important part of the defensive scheme.

At the end of a ten-mile march, on the 24th, we finally reached El Arish in the afternoon—within measurable distance of Gaza. Above the column a German aeroplane

circled, the observer apparently taking a keen interest in the proceedings. The route during the last few miles lay close to the beach, and later the troops were able to indulge in a very acceptable bathe. The Battery had been twenty-five days on the desert since leaving Moascar, and the supply of water had been somewhat limited.

Although the Turks had only recently vacated the town (it was captured on December 21, 1916), a large camp had already sprung up along the coast, and the Battery was able to secure tents for the first time since the commencement of the march.

El Arish, a picturesque Egyptian town with its flat-roofed mud houses grouped around its one substantial stone mosque, had been completely denuded by the Turks of all men of military age, so that only old men, women and children remained. From the minaret of the mosque the voice of a muezzin would be heard thrice daily calling the Faithful to prayer, as it calls from thousands of minarets in various parts of the Old World :

Allah is most great! I witness that there is no God but Allah!  
And Mohammed is the apostle of Allah! Come to prayer!  
Prayer is better than work! Come to salvation! God is most  
great! There is no God but Allah!

A magnificent voice had the muezzin of the mosque of El Arish. Sonorous and clear, it echoed and re-echoed among the houses, penetrating to every part of the town, and fading to silence among the sand-hills of the desert. On the north side of the town there were extensive groves of date palms and fig-trees, with here and there fields of mealies.

Two days after the arrival of the Battery at El Arish, Major R. A. Hatton, who had commanded the Battery from the later months of 1914, relinquished command on being posted to England. He had proved himself a very keen, enthusiastic officer, and it was with regret that the Battery saw him depart for Kantara. Appointed to command a





MAJOR H. S. MARTIN  
FOURTH CLASS ORDER OF THE NILE  
COMMANDED "B" BATTERY, 271ST BRIGADE, FROM MARCH 1, 1917, TO  
THE END OF THE WAR



group of heavy artillery in France, he saw much heavy fighting, and was killed in action on October 23, 1918.

The departure at the same time of the commander of "A" Battery, Major Victor Castellan, a keen and capable gunner, was also looked upon as a personal loss by members of "B" Battery, in which he had served as a battery officer for a great many years prior to the outbreak of war.

On March 3, Major H. S. Martin, posted from the Norfolk Brigade of our 54th Divisional Artillery, arrived to take over command of the Battery.

During the Battery's stay at El Arish, gunnery practice took place in the Wadi el Arish—the Brook of Egypt of Bible history, and the principal watercourse in Sinai. It was dry, however, at this period. An aeroplane co-operated and the Battery did some very satisfactory shooting.

For three days a blinding sandstorm blew off the desert, making tent life very uncomfortable, and curtailing visibility almost as effectually as a London fog.

Leaving El Arish at 5 o'clock in the afternoon of March 20, the Brigade marched on to El Burge, a distance of about fourteen miles, in company with the 161st Infantry Brigade, and arrived about ten o'clock. Starting at sunset the following day, the Brigade reached Sheikh Zoweid at the end of a ten-mile march, and bivouacked. Marching in the early morning of the 24th, Rafa was reached about 10.30 A.M.

Rafa marks the frontier dividing Egypt and Palestine, and also, as far as the coastal plain is concerned, marks the limit of the desert, for cultivation really commences here. The conventional frontier line is of interest owing to the fact that it is marked by a chain of broken columns of varying size planted on end in the ground, the origin of which is doubtful, but most probably they were taken from the desecrated churches of the old Crusaders.

Behind is the arid waste of the desert, its monotonous landscape of yellow sandhills, glaring and dazzling to the eyes under the bright hot sunshine, unrelieved, except by an occasional clump of palms shimmering in the heat haze or

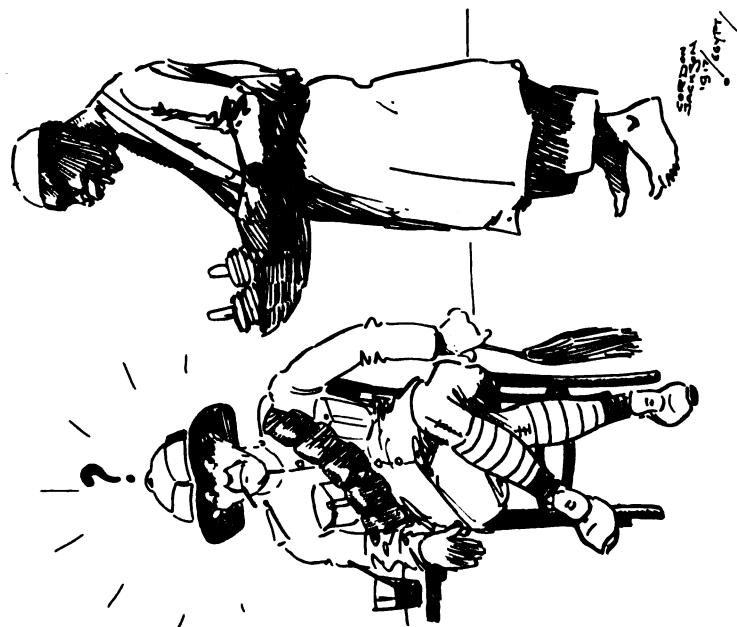
reflected by the mirage as in the surface of a lake. It was with striking suddenness that we emerged from the desert on to a grassy plain, dotted here and there with bright green fields of barley, very restful to the eyes, while the air was laden with the scent of flowers.

We were rapidly drawing on to the first great engagement of our campaign—the fight for Gaza. On the morning of the 25th the men tumbled out of their bivouacs at the early hour of 1 o'clock, and an hour or so later were continuing the march by the light of a brilliant moon through green undulating grassland reminiscent of Salisbury Plain. Although very cold before dawn, the rising sun soon warmed the country, and dried the dew-soaked khaki, and by midday the heat was oppressive. Bene Sala was reached about 9 o'clock in the morning, and the column halted for a few hours. The horses were unharnessed and turned out to graze to their heart's content in a field of green barley, enclosed by hedges of giant cactus.

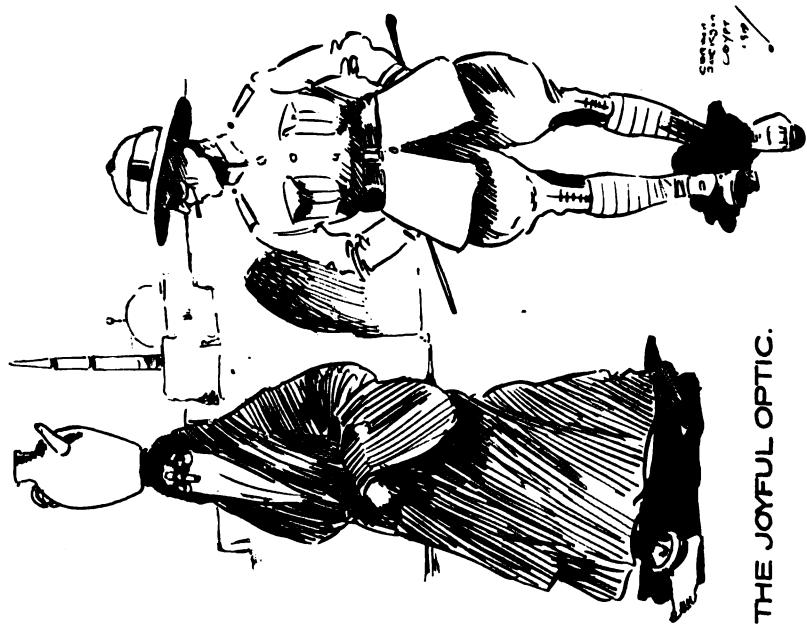
About 4 o'clock in the afternoon, by which time it was much cooler, the march was resumed, and forcing the pace a little the Brigade crossed the low range of hills covering Deir el Belah, and marched into the plain beyond. From the high ground Gaza could be seen in the distance towards the coast, the setting sun shining on the white buildings, and domes of mosques and tombs. On the plain various other columns of British troops came into view, converging towards the clump of palm-trees which marked the Arab village of Deir el Belah, and a plentiful supply of water. Night was well advanced by the time the Brigade reached its bivouac in a fold of the hills forming part of the Goz el Taire Ridge, to the north-east of Belah, and the horses having been watered and fed, the troops hastened to snatch an hour or so of much needed sleep, in view of the early move ordered for the following morning—a march which, it was confidently anticipated, would terminate in Gaza. Serious opposition on the part of the Turks was not expected. In fact, the rôle allotted them in the proceedings of the morrow was that of marching



THE UMPTEENTH HAWKER!



THE JOYFUL OPTIC.



out of the town as the British column marched in, a presumption which was certainly not justified, as subsequent events proved. Such is hope ! This was March 25, 1917, and it was November 6, 1917, when we did eventually get past Gaza !

In the small hours of the following morning, the 26th, the Brigade crossed the ridge of hills, and proceeded in the direction of Gaza, making for the south-eastern side of the town. The deep dry bed of the Wadi Ghuzze was crossed about 10 o'clock. Some little delay was caused in the early part of the march by a thick white mist which had appeared unexpectedly during the night and thoroughly obscured all landmarks. However, once through the hills and in the undulating country beyond, the mist cleared, and good progress was made. Soon after the crossing of the Wadi Ghuzze the infantry were in touch with the Turkish outposts, who were falling back on the town. Infantry of the 53rd (Welsh) Division attacked the outer defences in the strongly fortified Ali el Muntar sector, and it soon became evident that the Turks did not intend easily to relinquish their hold on the town. The 161st Infantry Brigade (Essex), with whom our own 271st Artillery Brigade was operating, was held in reserve to the 53rd Division at the commencement of the battle. In the early stages, therefore, the Brigade occupied a position of readiness, drawn up in line, under cover of Mansura Ridge, awaiting instructions to go into action.

It is not within the scope of this small account to record in detail the various phases of the first attack on Gaza, and the parts taken therein by the units which formed the attacking army, other than that of our own R.F.A. Brigade, much less to apportion praise or blame for the success or otherwise which attended the efforts at the expense of thousands of casualties. Sufficient for this plain account to deal primarily with the part taken in the battle by "B" Battery, 271st Brigade.

Although under cover from the Turkish positions by direct observation, the Brigade was soon discovered by hostile aircraft, which were very active, flying low over the British

positions, and an enemy battery opened fire on us with shrapnel, necessitating a move to a position a little farther back. One man was wounded, and several horses received slight wounds.

During the afternoon the battle developed, the infantry attacking repeatedly, and for the most part gaining their objectives. In several places they penetrated into the town, but losses had been heavy, and by half-past two in the afternoon the reserves had been drawn into the fight. The 271st Brigade was consequently ordered into action in support of the 159th Infantry Brigade. Mounting Mansura Ridge at a point about a mile from the position of readiness, the Brigade formed line and came into action in the open, at short range from the enemy's positions on the Green Mound and Ali el Muntar, and at once opened fire in support of the infantry attack on a strongly entrenched hill just south-east of Gaza. The infantry stormed the hill aided by the effective fire of the Brigade. Fire was then directed on Ali el Muntar, and in support of the infantry attack on the Green Mound positions, which had so far been held up by machine-gun fire. Enemy machine gunners concealed at the foot of Ali el Muntar (the mountain) were causing severe losses, and holding up the advance. It fell to the lot of the Brigade to clear them out of their position. Several other objectives were engaged, principally enemy trenches among thick cactus hedges, which the infantry were finding very difficult to deal with. Every effort was made to break down enemy opposition. Owing to gathering darkness, and lack of definite information as to the exact whereabouts of the infantry, firing ceased soon after sunset.

For some inexplicable reason the Brigade was practically undisturbed by the hostile artillery, although the twelve guns in line drawn up absolutely coverless on the open plain must have presented an admirable target. An attempt was made to shell the Brigade just as it dropped into action, some half-dozen rounds or so falling about 500 yards short. We opened fire on the hill where the enemy O.P. had been

located, and probably drove off the enemy observer or cut his wire. It was possibly due to the fact that the Turkish force defending Gaza had been so severely shaken by the repeated attacks of the British, that it was more concerned in rescuing its guns from impending capture. Whatever may have been the reason, an enemy aeroplane repeatedly fired smoke balls over the Brigade without response from its artillery. The pilot went away in disgust, and probably tendered his resignation. The Colonel's chief anxiety was that every gun should be got into action before the Brigade was silenced, as he fully expected it would be, in so open a position.

Our own Battery, and in fact all units of the 271st Brigade, have reason to congratulate themselves, and to look back proudly over this first day's Gaza engagement. With insouciant audacity, the Batteries trotted out into the open plain, deployed, and carried out the order "Halt! Action front!" as coolly as if training in England. In less than a minute they were down to it, enthusiastically and efficiently, worrying little about the importance of the occasion, and less about the consequences to themselves, firing over open-sights at direct and clearly visible objectives. The damage inflicted and help given the infantry were instantly obvious, even to the detachments at the guns. An artillery-gunner's paradise!

So that the teams and wagons would be at hand in readiness for a quick move, proper wagon lines were not selected, but the vehicles were kept on the move a few hundred yards in rear of the gun position so as not to present too easy a target to the enemy gunners. As often happens, the driver is not let into the secret of the why and wherefore of tactics, and one, evidently rather bored at having to do driving evolutions on such a hot and memorable occasion, in an injured tone made the innocent inquiry, "Quarter, what are we doing all this for?" "Well, stop where you are, me lad, and get your b—— head blown off!" explosively retorted that worthy, who was also feeling the heat.

## ROMFORD TO BEIRUT

The work did not go unappreciated by higher commands, as will be seen by the following copy of correspondence circulated after the action :

## MINUTE I

To C.R.A., 53rd Div.

SC 1/1

3/4/17.

DEAR GENERAL LE MOTTE,

I write to say how much the 158th Inf. Bde., my own Bde., the 159th Inf. Bde., appreciate the very efficient artillery support afforded by the 271 R.F.A. Bde. on March 26.

These two Brigades had a very difficult problem to solve, and had struggled on with little support from our right flank, which was the position from which effective support could alone be given on some of the positions we were attacking—we had especially asked for this. Col. Laurie came up some time about 15.50 and opened 16.15, I believe from our right flank, and cleared up the position for us.

Both General Mott and I think the manner in which the artillery Bde. supported us worthy of being specially recorded. His support was not mechanical, but intelligent and careful. He gave us all we asked for, and in doing so avoided any injury to our own men, a very delicate matter, as his shells had to be placed just in front of our advancing infantry.

Col. Laurie will, I am sure, be glad to hear that he scored a direct hit on one of the enemy M. guns, in the words of one of my officers who was in the firing line “completely blowing it up.”

Perhaps you will kindly see that this letter reaches Col. Laurie's superior officer.

Yours truly,  
(sgd.) J. H. TRAVERS, Bd. Gen.,  
Commdg. 159 Inf. Bde.

To C.R.A., 54th Div.

## MINUTE II

DEAR SANDILANDS,

In forwarding this letter to you, may I add my appreciation of the work of this Bde. on the afternoon in question.

I had to place it in an open position, without cover from view of any kind, and to advance to its position by a flank march fully exposed to view, time not permitting of the long detour required to get a covered line of advance.

I called at 271 Bde. H.Q. to-day to personally convey my thanks, but had the misfortune to find the O.C. out.

Yours sincerely,  
(Sgd.) R. E. A. Le MOTTE, Bd. Gen.,  
C.R.A., 53rd Div.

## MINUTE III

O/C 271 Bde. R.F.A.

Forwarded for communication to officers commanding batteries.

(Sgd.) G. C. DRINKWATER, Capt.  
S.C. R.A., 54th Divn.

At dusk the Brigade withdrew from the position to El Burjaliye, under orders of the C.R.A. 53rd Division, operations for the time being having ceased in this particular sector, although the sounds of heavy fighting and bombing could still be heard away to the left. We "stood to" all night in a field of standing corn, awaiting instructions and replenishing ammunition, one hundred and eighty rounds having been fired by us alone during the afternoon.

Early next morning, the 27th, the Battery, still acting under the instructions of the 53rd Division, returned to the neighbourhood of the Brigade position of the night before, but the arrival of Turkish reinforcements necessitated our removal to a position at the head of the Happy Valley, whence we shelled the enemy infantry advancing across the open plain. Subsequently the Battery moved again to another position south of Mansura. The Turks, as it afterwards became known, had received substantial reinforcements during the night from Beersheba and elsewhere, and, about 10 o'clock in the morning, severe hostile shelling developed from the direction of the Sheikh Abbas Ridge, away on the right flank. At 2 o'clock the Battery, with the other Batteries of the Brigade, were ordered to occupy a position just west of El Burjaliye, in support of the 158th, 160th, and 161st Infantry Brigades, who were holding the El Sire-Ali Muntar Ridge.

Both men and horses were by this time feeling acutely the want of water and rest, the few old cisterns which had been discovered being totally inadequate to supply both men

and animals with water. As a matter of fact, at about this time the horses went without water for over 26 hours. Owing to the rapidity of the moves from one position to another, a large quantity of telephone wire had to be abandoned, there being no time to reel it in.

Major H. R. Wilson, commanding "A" Battery, had a narrow escape during the early stages of the second day's fighting. Whilst traversing a crest exposed to enemy shell fire coming from the direction of the Sheikh Abbas Ridge, a close burst of an enemy shell killed his horse, the Major fortunately escaping without injury.

Drivers of wagons engaged in the replenishment of ammunition also had an exciting time in traversing the same stretch of exposed country. It was expedient to make a dash for it, and with bodies bending low over their horses' necks, a slackened rein, and spurs clapped home, a hell-for-leather gallop carried them through the danger zone, and the ammunition was delivered where it was most needed. Truly the lot of the Royal Artillery driver has its compensations.

The infantry during the day and previous night had dug themselves in, while the Brigade remained in action at El Burjaliye, engaging the enemy as occasion offered; but the Turkish force from Beersheba showed no disposition to advance very far, or perhaps was over-cautious.

The men were very fatigued by their exertions of the last two days and nights, accentuated by want of water and sleep. The water camels, which should have reached the Battery during the night or early morning, failed to arrive until late in the afternoon, the convoy having been shelled *en route*.

Soon after dusk the army commenced to withdraw, having failed to take the town, the batteries covering the withdrawal of the infantry.

"B" Battery limbered up about 7 o'clock in the evening, and entering the bed of a tributary of the Wadi Ghuzze—which formed a kind of sunken road—rendezvoused at the White House (an old mud and straw structure, dilapidated

and sun-bleached). Here there was a wait of two or three hours, while columns of infantry and other troops marched quietly and in perfect order back towards Deir el Belah. So weary were the men of the Battery, that it was with difficulty they remained awake while parties took turns to snatch a few minutes' repose. Even the teams laid down harnessed up and slept with the drivers alongside.

At last the turn of the Battery came to march on, and at the end of a tedious march back through the hills we arrived at Deir el Belah at 4.30 the following morning, the 28th, where a halt was called, and the men were able to secure an hour and a half's sleep. The Battery "stood to" nearly all day awaiting orders, but towards evening, when it became evident that the Turks did not intend to follow up the retirement, a bivouac was established, and the horses were unharnessed. The infantry, in the meanwhile, had consolidated a strong position on the Goz el Taire Ridge, north and north-east of Deir el Belah, and about five miles south-west of Gaza.

The incidents of the first Gaza battle have left an indelible impression in the memory of those who took part in it, but few, if any, can have a clear recollection of the return march to Deir el Belah. Men, nearly deadbeat, dozed on the backs of their tired animals until suddenly jerked into a condition of temporary semi-consciousness by their frequently stumbling mounts, or by a sub-conscious prompting to save themselves, by frantically clutching the saddle while in the act of falling off. To most of us the recollection of this march is an absolute blank except for a vague impression of a white house, and a challenging sentry carrying a lantern who indicated the road through the hills to Deir el Belah. 'Twas like an uneasy dream.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE OLD ROAD

LIKE many another army, even back in the dim past, thousands of years before the Christian era, we had travelled the route between Egypt and Syria, meeting at the end stout opposition and bitter conflict, and had been forced to withdraw for a fresh breath.

Whilst the army is collected outside Gaza, girding up its loins for the new attack which was ultimately launched on April 16, let us take the opportunity of glancing back on the road from Kantara in Egypt along which we came into Syria.

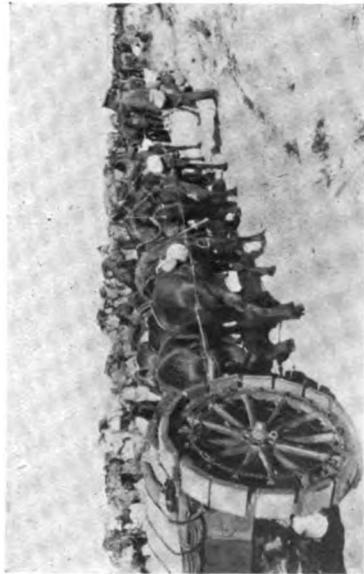
The writers are deeply indebted to Lieut.-Colonel Gibbons, D.S.O., for permission to reproduce Chapter IV, "The Old Road," from his splendid volume "With the 1/5th Essex in the East," which deals with a gallant infantry unit of the 54th Division, with which our Battery was often associated during the Palestine campaign. Colonel Gibbons has sketched out the historical attachment of the route in concise and interesting form, and we are well satisfied to leave the reader temporarily in his able hands.

\* \* \* \*

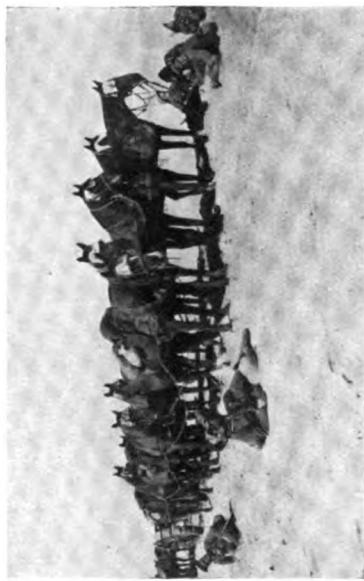
Reader, do you know the history of this old desert road? If you do, don't trouble to read this chapter, which is a digression from the doings of the 5th Essex. If you don't, come and sit with me in the twilight on the banks of the Wadi el Arish, the ancient "River of Egypt," the western boundary of the land which was given to Abraham and his seed, and

THE "OLD ROAD"

To  
PALESTINE  
⌚



FROM  
PALESTINE  
⌚





perchance we may see some of the ghosts of the past—kings, prophets, pilgrims, conquerors, mighty armies, fugitives, caravans and raiding bands—as they cross and recross this old river bed, this way and that, through the mists of time.

How long it has been in use as a great highway none can tell, but the mists of antiquity clear a little in 2200 B.C. or thereabouts. Then we know that the peoples of Western Asia began to be pushed westwards, and there was, along this very road, a constant stream of migration, which peopled the Delta of the Nile with the nomadic Semitic tribes of Edom and Southern Syria, who for centuries had been leading their herds to feed in those fertile lands. The foreigners became so strong in the land that they eventually conquered it and set up a new dynasty, the “*Hyksos*” or Shepherd Kings, who ruled Egypt for 400 years. Towards the end of this period we see old father Abraham, with Sarah his wife, driven by famine, taking this same old road with his flocks. Then we see the Ishmaelites going down into Egypt, after buying little Joseph for twenty pieces of silver. It was a good bargain for Egypt.

Before long all countries were streaming into Egypt to buy corn during the great famine that the wise Chancellor had foreseen. Jacob, stricken in years, with his “three score and ten souls” trudge their way by this sandy road to the land of Goshen to dwell in the land of his famous son. We see, too, the return of the remains of the patriarch, borne back in state to be buried at Hebron, escorted by “all the servants of Pharaoh and the elders of the land of Egypt—chariots and horsemen—a very great company.”

Next the old road sees the expulsion of the foreign rulers by Amasis, the founder of the 18th Dynasty in 1600 B.C. A few years later we see the great king Thotmes leading an army along this road and waging successful war in Asia. His grandson Thotmes III, the greatest warrior of his race, carried on ceaseless wars for fifty years. His conquests extended as far north as Karkemish, and Assyria was compelled to pay tribute to Egypt. He and his son Amenophis ruled

a mighty empire, extending from Ethiopia to the Euphrates. It was a busy time for the old road in those days. Palestine became a province of Egypt, and many letters have been found which were sent by desert post from the Governors of Palestine cities to the Egyptian kings.

Then came the wars with the rising power of the Syrians, and there was ebb and flow of armies, like the ebb and flow of the sand itself, up and down the historic highway. Rameses I was hard put to it to hold his own, but his son Seti had more success, and so had his famous grandson Rameses II, who in 1328 B.C. led a mighty host against Khita, King of Syria, and chiefly by his own personal valour turned what looked like being a disaster to the Egyptian Army into a great victory, in which Khita was overcome with great slaughter, and Rameses continued his conquests even to the shores of the Black Sea. A hard man this Rameses, as the children of Israel (who had by this time “multiplied and waxed exceeding mighty, and the land was filled with them”) found to their cost. By him they were scattered all over Egypt and put to forced labour on the public works and upon the building of the “treasure cities Pithon and Raamses.” We know how at last they were released from bondage, probably in the reign of Menephthah his son, who so many times “refused to let them go”—but that is another story. They didn’t come by this road. Those who flee from the wrath of a king eschew the king’s highway.

About 1200 B.C. we see a large force marching westwards to conquer Egypt in the time of Rameses III. This time it was supported by a fleet—Phoenician or Philistine perhaps—and a battle was fought near the old mouth of the Nile (now dry), where Pelusium afterwards stood,—and now is not. The Egyptians defeated the invaders and chased them back along this same old road into Syria again. But the Egyptians did not stop in Syria this time. They feared this new thing in war—sea power—threatening their communications, and besides there were troublous times at home; so we see the victorious army returning to their own country,

resting content with such loot as Palestine afforded. For a time the road seems to have become less warlike, and the caravans of the Phœnicians and other traders formed the principal traffic. Egypt was busy with a North *v.* South trouble, which ended in Southern or Upper Egypt becoming a province of Lower Egypt. Thebes fell on evil days, and Tanis in the Delta became the capital of the country. Incidentally this shifting of power from south to north made relations with Asia more intimate and the desert route became as important as ever. But as far as we know, for a short time—a mere couple of centuries or so—the road ceased to give footing to armies from either hand, and the peaceful caravans pursued their way. About 1015 B.C. we have the emissaries of King Solomon visiting Egypt and purchasing horses and chariots. The following year it must have been an imposing cavalcade which brought the daughter of Pharaoh to the court of Jerusalem, to be the bride—one of the brides—of that much married monarch, Solomon, King of all Israel. Then comes sedition in the land, and Jeroboam, son of Nebat, hurries secretly to Egypt on mischief bent.

A few more years and once more the distant sand cloud betokens the coming of a mighty army. The year 971 B.C. saw—according to Josephus—an army of 60,000 cavalry and 400,000 infantry with 1200 chariots of war, under Shishak, King of Egypt, marching by this road to invade Palestine. The ancient historians were not particular to a few thousands and probably the numbers are exaggerated, but there is the army right enough. Are not the names of 150 cities of Palestine captured by Shishak in this campaign written in stone on the walls of the great hall at Karnak? And even to Jerusalem he came, “and he took away the treasures of the house of the Lord” (1 Kings xiv 25–26). Thus alone was Rehoboam, King of Judah, able to save his capital. It was a rich convoy that wound its way through the desert passes when they brought back the spoils of the Temple and of the King’s palace. But Judah is to be revenged. Yet another large army under King Osorkon takes the road from Egypt.

With high hopes it swings past, singing its battle songs. In a few days, utterly defeated by Asa, King of Judah, at Mareshah, its broken remnants wend their way back towards the setting sun.

For another two centuries or so the road seems to have borne no armies. A new power—the Assyrian—was rising in the east, and Israel and Judah had become tributary to it. Observe those hook-nosed, bearded men, silently hurrying westward. They are the secret messengers of Hoshea, King of Israel, to “So, King of Egypt” (2 Kings xvii 4), for help to deliver him from the oppressor. Help was forthcoming, such as it was, and once more Egypt takes the field, only to be defeated at Rafa, not many miles from where we sit, by Sargon, King of Assyria, in 720 B.C. The old road gets busy again. For fifty years there is war between Assyria and Egypt, and the armies of both countries cross and recross the desert on its well-worn track. In 701 B.C. the Egyptians once more return a defeated army at the hands of Sennacharib who had routed them at Altaka in Dan. Sennacharib follows in pursuit and lays siege to Pelusium, leaving Rabshakeh, his general, to destroy Jerusalem. Both projects were unsuccessful. The army had to be drawn off Pelusium, according to Herodotus, because “a multitude of mice gnawed all their bows to pieces in a single night.” The Assyrian king returns, only to find Rabshakeh’s army completely broken up by a pestilence—an event which also saved King Hezekiah of Judah from destruction, “And the Angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand; and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.” (2 Kings xix 35).

But still the rich land in the west draws the Assyrians like a magnet, and again in 670 B.C. we see approaching the army of King Esarhaddon, who marches it to Egypt, not to return until he has made the land of the Pharaohs an Assyrian province. Then once more the Egyptians make a strong bid for their freedom, and the next armies we see are moving

# EGYPTIAN

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eastward as of old. First the Assyrians, retreating and fighting, attacked and followed by the Egyptians under Psammetichus, governor of Sais, who for his prowess was made King of Egypt. Nineveh fell in 609 B.C. The Assyrian Empire collapsed like a pack of cards a few years after reaching the zenith of its power, and a new empire was set up in Babylon. Next we see another Egyptian king, Necho, bringing up fresh armies and continuing the war against the new Babylonian power. This Pharaoh, Necho, in 608 B.C. wins a great battle at Megiddo, slays Josiah, King of Judah, and we see Jehoahaz, the king's son, sent to Egypt, a prisoner along the old road, never to return. And in due time back comes Necho himself, now a fugitive from Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, who had defeated him on the far Euphrates. Twenty-two years later another Egyptian army crosses into Judæa to the assistance of King Zedekiah, who had rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, and again the Egyptians return, a broken army, pursued by the Babylonians. In 586 B.C. Jerusalem is destroyed, and a few years later we see the sorry remnant of Judah flying into Egypt with Jeremiah their prophet. In 581 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar again invades Egypt and brings back the fugitive Jews. The captivity is thus completely accomplished and Judæa lies desert for 70 years. The second Babylonian empire did not last long ; Babylon was captured by Cyrus, King of Persia, about 530 B.C., and a new power was in being to harass the Egyptians. Cambyses, the son of Cyrus, was the next King to cross the River of Egypt with an invading army, and Herodotus tells us wonderful stories of how this army was supplied with water in camel skins carried on live camels—there were no copper “fantasses” in those days. The wonder-loving old historian even describes how arrangements were made to lay *pipe lines*—there is surely nothing new under the sun—from a river in Arabia called the Corys, distant twelve days' journey, to carry the water into cisterns dug in the desert track to receive it. There were three separate pipes to three separate places, and the pipes were made of

“the skins of oxen and other beasts.” The Persian R.E. must have been an efficient service. And a permanent supply was afterwards kept up, according to the same authority, by collecting all the wine jars in the country and carrying them to Memphis, where they were filled with water and stored in dumps all along the road to Syria. But this was after the Persians had conquered Egypt. Cambyses, then, took the road, with his camel skins and (perhaps) his pipe lines, and defeated the Egyptians in a great battle near Pelusium. For more than a hundred years Egypt was a province of the Persian empire, and many a draft must have “proceeded by march route” to the occupied territory, their progress made easy by those wine-pot water dumps of theirs. Then followed a brief interval of independence, followed by a re-conquest by Artaxerxes, and so the ebb and flow over the desert track went on. The fourth and last conquest by the Persians was that under Darius.

Then the Persian empire fell in its turn, before Alexander the Great, of Macedon. The latter, after taking Gaza, brought his army by the same road in 332 B.C., occupied Egypt with little opposition, and founded the city bearing his name (irreverently abbreviated by the British army into “Alex”) after assuring himself of divine assistance by a visit to the temple of Jupiter Ammon at Siwa in the Libyan desert. After Alexander’s death at Babylon in 323 B.C., Ptolemy, one of his generals, led armies into Palestine to fight against Antigonus of Syria for the possession of that country. The Syrians in the end prevailed, and an attempt on their part to invade Egypt was stopped on the road by the Roman Senate. From that time forward Palestine came under the power of Rome, and there was a period of quiet for the desert road.

In 49 B.C., according to Plutarch, Cleopatra was banished to Syria, but returned disguised, to gain entrance by stratagem into the presence, and by her wiles into the heart also, of the great Julius Cæsar at Alexandria.

\* \* \* \*

When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt (Matthew ii 14).

But when Herod was dead, behold an Angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, Arise and take the young child and his mother and go into the land of Israel, for they are dead which sought the young child's life. And he arose and took the young child and his mother and came into the land of Israel (Matthew ii 19, 20).

So passed and repassed, obscure and unnoticed, the greatest Captain of them all.

\* \* \* \*

The next invaders from the West were the Romans under Titus, in A.D. 70, who utterly destroyed Jerusalem after one of the most terrible sieges in history. In A.D. 268, Zenobia, Queen of Palmyra, brought a large army across the desert and defeated the Romans in the Delta, later returning to her own city, where she was afterwards defeated and captured by the Emperor Aurelian. Roman legions continually tramped the road for nearly 400 years until A.D. 620, when Chosroes, King of Persia, marched into Egypt after taking Damascus and Jerusalem, and for ten years it was once more a Persian province. Chosroes met the fate of so many of his predecessors, being defeated by the Emperor Heraclius, and once more the Roman legions resumed their sway, based on Constantinople.

Then came the followers of Mahomet, and Arab governors came to Egypt appointed by the Khalifa at Baghdad. One of these governors, Ahmed ibn Tulun, revolted in A.D. 868, and again an army marched eastward and conquered Palestine. Forty years after, the Khalif Moktafi marched his army westward and re-conquered Egypt. What a military road ! Palestine again became a province of (Arab) Egypt and it was a governor appointed from there who was at Jerusalem when Godfrey de Bouillon captured the Holy City in A.D. 1099, and founded the Christian Kingdom of Jerusalem. In 1187 we see the army of Saleh-ed-Din, better known as Saladin, who had made himself Sultan of Egypt and built the Citadel in

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Cairo, marching eastwards, to defeat the Christians and deprive them of the greater part of their kingdom.

In 1251 St. Louis of France (Louis IX), after surrendering Damietta to the Moslems, led an army from Egypt, and repaired the fortresses on the coast and in Palestine, ready for the reception of reinforcements which never came, and in 1291 another Sultan, El-Ashraf Khalil, with yet another army from Egypt, came and finally expelled the Crusaders from the remnant of their Kingdom.

And then came the Turks. Sultan Selim I defeated the Arabs near Aleppo in 1516, and marched into Egypt. The latter became a province of the Ottoman Empire and remained so for four centuries. But during that time another great soldier was to try his luck by the desert route. This was Napoleon I. After his victory at the Battle of the Pyramids in 1798 the army of the Mamylukes of Egypt was split in two, one half under Ibrahim Bey retreating by this road into Syria. In February 1799 Napoleon determined on an invasion of that country and set out from Cairo with a sort of flying column of 12,000 men with 43 guns and 900 cavalry. His object was to strike quickly at the Turks in Syria while their organisation was still incomplete, take Acre, and return to Egypt in time to deal with another Turkish army which was expected to land in Egypt from the Island of Rhodes. An ambitious scheme for an army of 12,000 men, especially as he had just lost command of the sea at the hands of one Admiral Nelson, at Aboukir Bay. But Napoleon undertook it, and on February 20, 1799, took this town of El Arish. On June 1 he was back again, having been foiled by Sir Sydney Smith at Acre. In rear of his army the great coastal plain, says the official report, "presented but one blaze of fire." Every village had been destroyed and the crops burnt. Suffering greatly from want of water, his army hurried westward, arrived at Cairo on June 21, and on July 25, at the second battle of Aboukir, utterly defeated the Turkish army which had just arrived from Rhodes.

In 1831 Mahomet Ali, Turkish Governor of Egypt,

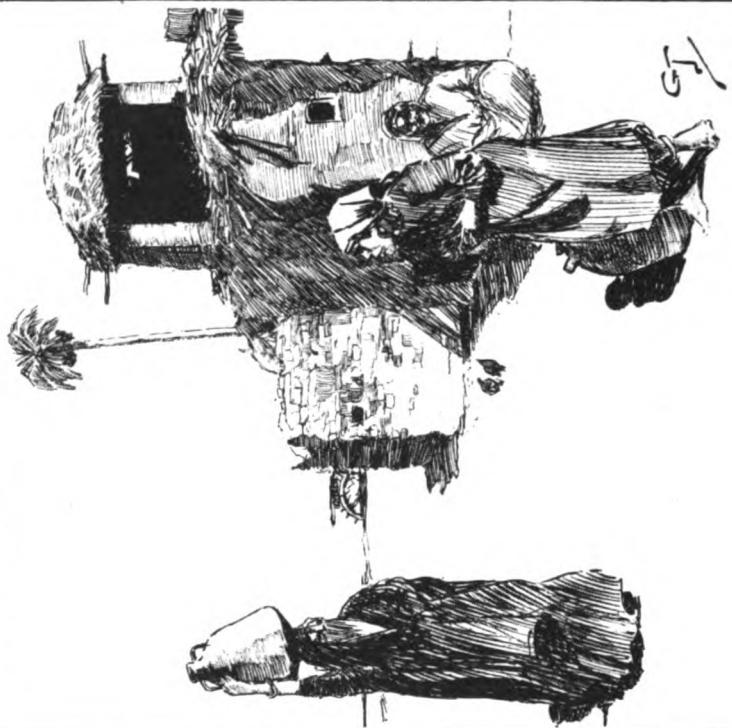


DOCKS, MARSEILLES.



NATIVE VILLAGE DWELLING.

SKETCHED NEAR EL AQISH.



declared his independence of Turkey. His son Ibrahim Pasha led an Egyptian army into Palestine, and gained victories over the Turks, but the European powers intervened and Ibrahim brought his army back. Then we have Turkish forces in the present war, one in 1915 actually reaching the Suez Canal and getting back again; the other, smashed up at Romani, is the one whose homeward tracks we of the 5th Essex have been following in our march to the Promised Land. Of all the armies that have trodden this road ours is perchance the last. Who knows?

Such is the story of the old road. Has any other road in the world such a history? And to-morrow we march eastwards, with hopes as high as any of theirs who went before us through the ages; our destiny, like theirs, in the hands of an inscrutable Providence.

## CHAPTER VII

### GAZA AND BEYOND (INCLUDING SECOND AND THIRD BATTLES)

March 29, 1917—November 7, 1917

THE British forces had retired a distance of approximately five miles from the Gaza defences during the night of March 27/28, and, as it afterwards transpired, the Turks also were busy withdrawing from their positions, which fact would account for their failure to follow up or even harass the retirement.

Apart from occasional long-range shelling by a 5·9 battery, the new British line was undisturbed by the enemy during the following fortnight. The guns went into action under cover, on the Goz el Taire Ridge, in support of the outpost line held by the 162nd Infantry Brigade, until that line was taken over by the cavalry on March 31. The next day an infantry reconnaissance took place of the enemy's positions composing the El Sire and El Burjaliye line, close to Gaza, with the support of the Batteries, but the guns were not needed. On April 6 an officers' reconnaissance was organised, and—operating under enemy shell fire—selected positions for the guns in the Sharta area, south-east of Gaza.

On April 16 orders were received to march at midnight, and support the attack of the 163rd Infantry Brigade on the Sheikh Abbas Ridge, which was to commence at dawn. The Battery marched out with the infantry column at midnight, travelling in an easterly direction, and accompanied by Tanks. At the end of a march of about five miles, the guns were brought into action in the position previously selected at

Sharta, ready to open fire as soon as it was light enough to observe. During the march to the position silence was, of course, strictly enjoined on the troops, in order that the Turks should not discover the movement; this precaution was, however, negatived by the spluttering roar emitted by the Tanks, which, in all probability, was heard in Gaza itself, as they floundered over the ground, leaving in their wake a trail of sparks.

At dawn the 163rd Brigade occupied the Sheikh Abbas Ridge without requiring the support of the batteries on the right flank, and consolidated their position by digging in on the edge of the cliff. One of the Tanks, which had done valuable work in clearing the enemy off the ridge, was struck by a shell and burnt out. Prior to the attack, the infantry had secured to their packs pieces of bright tin, cut from biscuit boxes and so forth, which glinted in the sun, so that their progress could be followed accurately by battery commanders.

Under cover of darkness, our Battery advanced about a thousand yards to a better position, the B.C. establishing his observation post on the highest part of the Sheikh Abbas Ridge. The enemy trenches were registered, and a battery which was located was successfully engaged. In the evening the O.P. was moved forward near the Infantry Brigade Headquarters on the lip of the cup-like conformation of the ground in which the batteries found positions. At dawn next day, April 18, the guns bombarded the enemy's works and trenches for a period of two hours, the infantry then advancing to the attack under the covering fire of the guns. A heavy fire was kept up all day in support of this attack, the Brigade expending some three thousand rounds of ammunition.

At the Battery Commander's vantage point, from the other side, our old friend Ali el Muntar could be seen, one of the most prominent features round Gaza. During the afternoon the O.P., which was the only good one available, and for that reason obvious and known to the enemy, came in for some unwelcome attention on the part of a 5.9 battery

of howitzers, shell after shell falling with shattering crashes and almost uncanny precision close to the shallow trench which afforded cover for the observation party.

At night the 163rd Brigade, which had been held up all day south of the Beersheba "road," withdrew, and was relieved by the 161st Brigade, which dug itself in on the edge of the ridge about a thousand yards in rear. The attack had been unsuccessful. To reach the enemy position necessitated an advance of well over a thousand yards over country exposed for the most part to enemy fire, and the assaulting battalions had soon come under intense fire, rifle and machine-gun, as well as a heavy bombardment of 5·9's and guns of less calibre. Although suffering severe casualties they had hung on tenaciously to the ground gained, repulsing an enemy counter-attack with the assistance of the batteries, until nightfall, when, as already stated, they withdrew, covered by the fire of the guns.

The next few days was a period of tension; counter-attacks on the British line were expected at any time, and the guns of both sides were very active. Both infantry and artillery worked hard day and night in the consolidation of their positions, in addition to which the batteries registered all ground within range, bombarded the enemy works, and to the best of their ability generally harassed him. To make matters worse, the weather was very hot during the day, and there was no shelter from the sun, its rays being unduly powerful in the close confines of the natural basin of broken country which formed the Sheikh Abbas salient. Only sufficient water for drinking purposes could be got up to the trenches and O.P.'s, and it invariably arrived hot and steaming. For a week our Battery O.P. party were unable to wash or shave, or even temporarily discard boots or clothing. Myriads of pestering flies put the finishing touch to the discomforts of that first week on the Sheikh Abbas Ridge.

For the second time the attack on Gaza had failed, inasmuch as the town still remained in the hands of the Turks, although, undoubtedly, useful results had been





gained by the British in establishing themselves in close contact with the enemy on the sea front, and by the capture of the Sheikh Abbas and Mansura Ridges, and other points of tactical importance.

On the morning of May 1 the Turks bombarded the area behind the cliff with heavy guns ; one shell fell in a dug-out in rear of "C" Battery's observation post, killing two and wounding four men who were working in it.

Tank Redoubt and its connecting works were subjected by us to periodical bursts of gun fire throughout day and night. The Redoubt, which had been the objective of the attack by the 163rd Infantry Brigade on April 18, was a strongly entrenched position, just south of the Beersheba "road" culminating in the abandoned Tank. It had been so named from the fact that one of the Tanks assisting the assault, having reached the position and done great execution, was at last knocked out by a direct hit, and remained perched on top of the Redoubt, a monument to a gallant fight. Even in its derelict state its usefulness was by no means ended, for, in the months of trench warfare which followed, it formed a valuable fixture and registration point for the British batteries, to the obvious discomfort and annoyance of the Turks holding the position.

Both armies had now settled down to a period of trench warfare, which endured until General Sir E. Allenby (now Lord Allenby) launched his famous attack in November, with such complete success and far-reaching results. During this period the Battery was in action continuously until August 5, when it pulled out for a fortnight's rest at Sheikh Shabassi, going into action again on August 21.

On the Palestine front a vastly different type of warfare confronted us compared to that in France, or even to that on the Gallipoli Peninsula from which a great part of the Division had come. Here there were no trench systems separated by mere feet and yards, in devastated areas of tumbled bricks and mortar ; no local inhabitants still in the rear tending estaminets ; no linkage of inhabited, cultivated

and, in the past, industrious country extending back to the area sufficiently far removed from the scene of actual hostilities as to be comparatively normal. Compared with the East, the battlefields of France were in most respects similar to English country and villages, with the hand of civilisation everywhere apparent.

Here on the fringe of Palestine the line was seemingly isolated in the desert and plains, and extended from the sea to miles inland by a bedraggled outpost scheme. Our communicating line and artery was the "road" from Kantara already described. In places miles of lonely and hillocky expanse separated the armies, whilst at other rare places—as in some of the Gaza sectors—the opposing trenches and advanced posts approached the Flanders degree of closeness. Columns could wind in and out of wadis and between hills in perfect cover, whilst at other points boundless plains prevented the slightest advance with any safety. A lone tree stuck in the centre of a vast waste was oftentimes the sole relieving feature, and this was invariably well "registered" by both sides.

A battery-staff man gives his impressions of a raid in which our Battery co-operated about this time, and our surroundings and feelings are vividly portrayed.

The absolute quietude of the night was broken only by the shrill and plaintive chirping of crickets in the coarse grass and barley stubble over the parapet, and the whispering of men in the fire-bays. From the general tenseness it was apparent that a "something" was afoot, and I attribute my occasional trembling more to feverish excitement and enforced inaction than to fear. A Palestine night does not inspire confidence—rather awe at the air of inexplicable mystery. From dusk onwards a feeling as of a haunting indefinite void seems to pervade this war front of the East, and the most unimpressionable mind is affected.

The occasional dull crack of a Turkish sniper's rifle was followed by an eerie and instantaneous succession of

echoes and sibilant rustle, as if the bullet were ploughing through a field of reeds, till we heard the ping . . . phut as it found a sandbag.

Then—again that unnerving silence.

\* \* \* \*

The tenseness was somewhat relaxed when our artillery indulged in one of its strafes, and I amused myself picking out the various types of ordnance and shell by the sound ; the dull thud completed by a sort of tinny bang easily discriminated the howitzer from the gun with its resonant explosion. One becomes an adept at particularising by listening to the degree and tone of the creeping whirr of the howitzer shells, and the screeches and roars of the gun missiles as they travel overhead.

To-night there seemed a mournful hollow note as the masses of metal died away with faint screams across the intervening no-man's land into temporary oblivion ; seemingly hours afterwards, distant explosions and the faint vibratory bang of shrapnel afforded a reminder that the passing shells had a function to fulfil. The vague apprehension which possesses one on occasions like these is rendered more acute by the unfathomable weirdness of a Holy Land night.

Unlike France, the no-man's region is in places quite extensive in width, and as the moon rose and cast a soft translucent light through the misty darkness, I could discern across the space a native "farmstead" and straggly palms well away into the Turks' lines. The fact of being able to define *something*, to realise a certain tangibility, yielded infinite relief.

\* \* \* \*

Officers were impatiently peering at their watches, and the idea entered my mind that an attack was imminent. We in the artillery O.P. knew something was on, and by inquiry outside I ascertained that a strong patrol had gone over more than an hour before, and the strained occupants of the trenches were awaiting the inevitable medley which would ensue when

the party had approached their objective sufficiently near to rush to the attack.

\* \* \* \*

Hark ! What was that ? The disconcerting stillness was interrupted by the barking cry of a desert dog which grew into a confusion of howls, as if a whole pack were disturbed.

“ They’ll have to get at it now,” observed a subaltern standing near the O.P. “ That’s Johnny’s warning signal. I well remember it on the Peninsula ; his patrols have evidently scented our surprise party. Now for the fun ! ”

And sure enough, carried faintly across the intervening terrain, a din of shouts and rifle-firing was heard. The pop-pop of small arms and machine gun grew in volume, and very soon the ominous ping . . . ping began to sound overhead. I involuntarily ducked, although there was three or four feet of parapet above my head.

A number of coloured lights ascended from the direction of the palms, and the subaltern standing near the O.P. shouted to my officer in charge.

“ Good enough ! ” was the response, and he gave me at the telephone some cut-and-dried instructions.

The Battery required no second order, and booms and drones were soon rending the air to fulfil their part in the night’s programme.

The rifle shots and shouting had apparently ceased, possibly absorbed in the artillery crashing, and after this deafening interlude all was again tranquil and still. It is a veritable conflict of opposed spasms which comprises the acoustic element of nocturnal war in this desolate expanse.

\* \* \* \*

My officer left the telephone pit, and to all intents and purposes I was in a deserted world. The dank mist had lifted, and in the full moonlight I looked outside and saw the clear-cut crests and silent plains stretching in all directions. A wadi ran close against the rear of the O.P., and I could

hear the clanking of water fantasses as a string of camels slowly strode along behind their Arab driver. The quavering wail of an Arab singing was immediately stifled as the guard and guide shut him up with a solid English oath blended with one or two ill-pronounced Arabic words.

After about half an hour of irksome silence, engendering a variety of fantastic thoughts, I was told that the patrol had returned, bringing five prisoners and two wounded of their own party ; they had cleared the palm grove, inflicting many casualties.

\* \* \* \*

Dozing off at the 'phone, I awoke with a start to find a couple of huge ants vying with a baby scorpion for supremacy in a race up the leg of my shorts. The scorpion's success was short-lived.

Outside, but for the continued chirping of crickets, all was quiet and peaceful, and I wondered if the entire string of incidents had been a dream.

But no ; my dreams in this country invariably conjure up hordes of Philistines, kings of places like Canaan, Saracens, and schoolboy Biblical history, jumbled together with smiling soubrettes, and the latest fashions in half-hose.

\* \* \* \*

And so the work in front of Gaza went on from day to day.

Under cover of darkness, on May 14, the guns were moved forward a few hundred yards, the old position having been discovered by the enemy. A few days later, the position lately vacated was heavily shelled, with aeroplane observation, so the move had been made only just in time. The empty wagons and dummy guns left in this old gun line were all more or less damaged by splinters, and a direct hit had been scored on one emplacement. Another consoling item of news for the Turkish newspapers.

Enemy aeroplanes were very active in the bright moonlight nights of the second week in May, bombing and shooting from

machine guns at low altitudes. At midnight on May 11 the Turks raided the British trenches with bombs, but were held up at the wire, the Battery shelling them back to their own lines. A raid was again attempted on the 14th against the line held by the 6th Essex, but it was easily repulsed.

On June 11, evidently in retaliation for some shooting the Brigade had been doing with a view to creating a diversion on the right, whilst operations were carried on by the 52nd (Scottish) Division on the left, the enemy heavily bombarded the Sheikh Abbas Ridge and basin with both heavy batteries and field guns. During about ten minutes approximately 150 shells fell into the basin close behind the ridge. By sheer good luck only two casualties were sustained by the infantry, although water and transport convoys were at the time delivering their loads.

It being midsummer, the bright green of the fields and plains had disappeared, to be replaced by a bare dried-up landscape covered with tracks made by troops and transport criss-crossing in all directions. It was thick with inches of fine dust, which rose in clouds high in the air above the moving vehicles or columns of infantry. Whilst the periodical *khamsens* were blowing, the heat and dust and swarms of flies made life far from pleasant. An epidemic of septic poisoning broke out among the troops about this time, and became very troublesome. The probable cause was heat and dust, and an insufficiency of green food, causing the blood to be in a very poor state.

At night on June 12, one section of the Battery was moved to a position behind Kurd Hill, a comparatively high hill of a ridge running north-east from the Wadi Ghuzze to Ali el Muntar. The following night the other section moved to the same position.

From the O.P. on Queen's Hill an excellent view was to be had of Gaza and the opposing front-line trenches. The town with its white buildings and minarets appeared very picturesque and cool, shaded by palms and other trees; so peaceful that it was hard to believe that two armies were at a

deadlock in the short space intervening between the O.P. and the town.

Ali el Muntar was the name of a hill, or small mountain, which was one of the outstanding features on the outskirts of Gaza. It was, in effect, the key to the Turkish position, located immediately south, or rather slightly south-west, of the town, and a complex trench system spread from its base. In the various attacks on Gaza it was a rare stumbling block, and many men of Essex lost their lives on its slopes. It is more or less historically established that Samson carried the Gates of Gaza to its heights.

#### SAMSON

In days of old, Samson, we're told  
(Who never used a razor),  
Easy as play, went one day  
And stole the Gates of Gaza ;  
With donkey's jaw upon the raw,  
The Philistines he batter'd,  
Until he'd slew a goodly few  
As if it hadn't matter'd ;  
He hustled some, took all who'd come,  
A real old hard-shell war knut ;  
Five times four score he killed, and more,  
And then—he had his hair cut !

(Not *The Iliad*.)

On June 25, the dépôt section, which had been previously moved up from Kantara to Deir el Belah, rejoined the Battery in the evening. Many of the N.C.O.'s and men had, however, previously arrived as reinforcements.

General Sir E. Allenby (now Lord Allenby) took command of the Palestine front on June 29, and on this day the enemy's artillery developed considerable activity during the light hours, increasing in volume as the British artillery retaliated. His guns were very difficult to locate, being concealed in orchards and plantations, and invisible to aircraft. Early next morning the shelling recommenced, and, as the day wore on, a regular artillery duel waged, until, in the evening, all natures of guns

on either side were merry, including our 8-inch howitzers. On July 2 the group of artillery in which our own battery was included heavily bombarded Umbrella Hill for twenty minutes, commencing at ten minutes past three in the afternoon, with a view to damaging the enemy's trenches and works, inflicting as much damage as possible, and shaking his morale. It was then kept under shrapnel fire throughout the night.

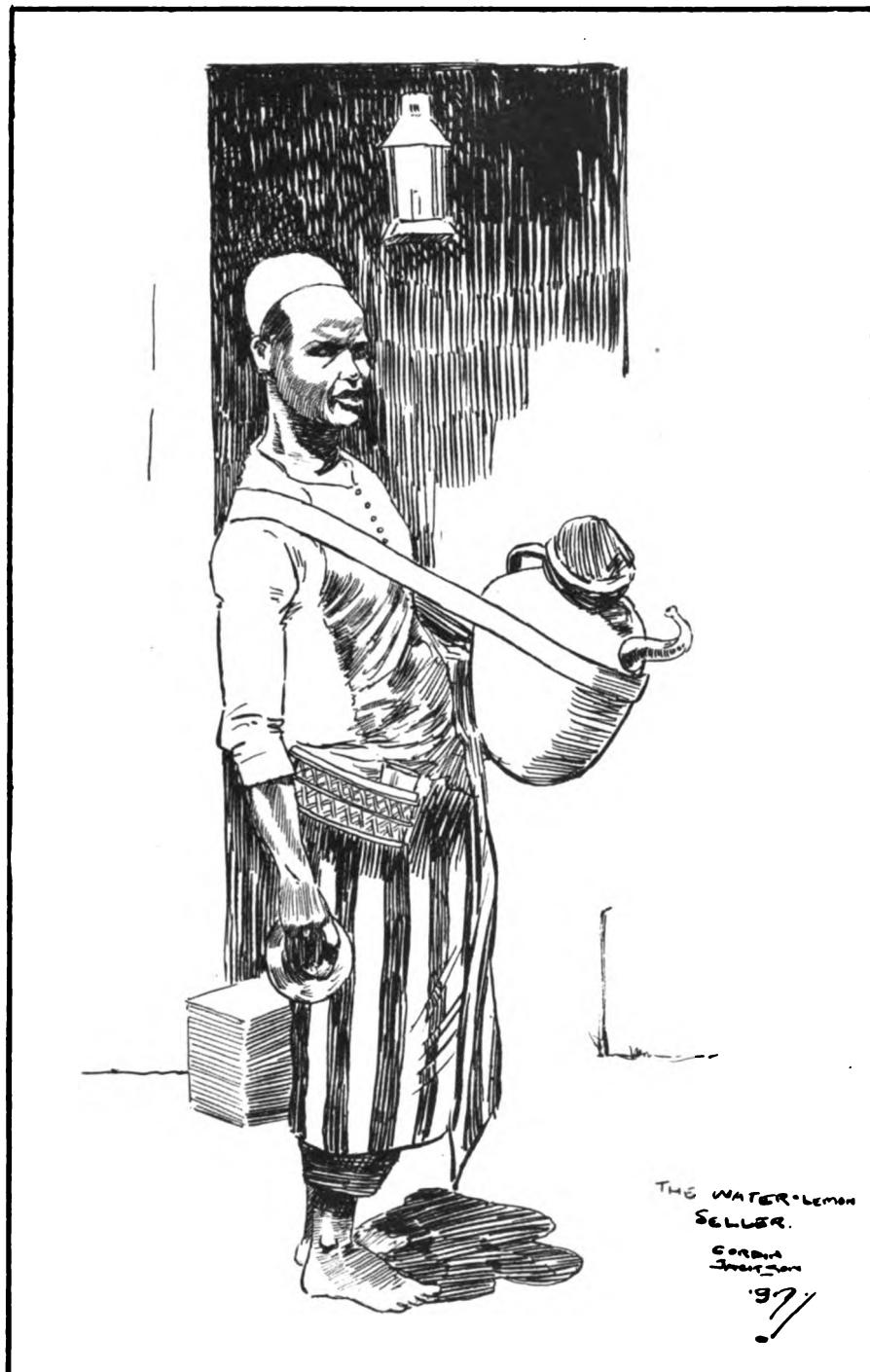
The dépôt section was brought into action on July 3, and one section was sent forward at night to take over an advanced position at Kurd Hill from "A" Battery of the 267th Brigade, R.F.A. At 11 o'clock at night the 4th Essex Battalion called for artillery help in subduing machine-gun fire, which was causing casualties. Fire from all three batteries of our Brigade was given, and kept up intermittently for an hour.

On July 6 the Commander-in-Chief, General Sir Edmund Allenby, visited the Brigade observation post on Kurd Hill.

The following day one section of our Battery went forward in order to cut wire on Outpost Hill, two lanes being cut. At night harassing fire was carried out by bursts of fire on selected parts of the enemy's line, all the field batteries and 4·5 howitzers in the coastal sector being engaged.

During the next week the Battery did a good deal of shooting, both by day and night, registering, or harassing enemy working parties. On the 14th, Beach Post, on the right of the Turks' line, was successfully raided by the infantry, aided by intense artillery bombardment. About sixty Turks were killed, while the casualties of the raiding force were one killed, two missing, and nine wounded.

Registration of targets was completed very carefully on July 19 and 20, by all batteries, with and without aeroplane co-operation. This drew heavy retaliatory fire from the Turks, which developed into mutual bombardment. At night, on the 20th, a strong raid on the enemy's position at Umbrella Hill was made by the 5th Bedfords, with the assistance of an intense artillery bombardment, in which all batteries in the sector took part; an immense amount of ammunition was



THE WATER+LEMON  
SELLER.

GORDON  
INGRAM

1897





fired. Over a hundred Turks were bayoneted, some prisoners taken, and several machine guns destroyed or captured. The Turks replied with a very heavy fire all along the line, and particularly concentrated for over three hours a terrific shelling by 5·9 howitzers upon Battalion Headquarters at Hereford Ridge, close to the "jumping off" place of the infantry attack. This part of the line ran through the sand dunes, and the heavy bombardment simply obliterated that portion of the trench system, causing severe casualties in the battalion holding the line, and among the returning raiding party. Gunner R. V. Stone, one of our telephonists, distinguished himself in this action by conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty, while engaged as telephonist to Lieut. F. L. Tibbs, artillery liaison officer, to whom he was of great service. He was later awarded the Military Medal.

Our Battery's part in a little "stunt" of this nature is outlined in the following pen-picture.

\* \* \* \*

"There's a little stunt on to-night, isn't there?"

"Yes. We're going to have a shot at Umbrella Hill; about 1 o'clock they're going over, I think."

"Be a 'good thing,' I reckon. Those fresh batteries have been registering all day, so Johnny Turk'll have a nice little surprise."

\* \* \* \*

The setting sun ushered out the oppressive heat and closeness of the Palestine day, and in the wagon line everyone was enjoying the couple of hours respite after sunset, which elevated all spirits. Here was a group of five, stripped to the waist, sluicing in a bucket half-filled with murky water; away on a fairly firm piece of sandy stubble a crowd was rushing about after a football. Snatches of song floated from the bivouacs and dug-outs. Teams were hooking into ration wagons, and a string of camels piloted by a gunner slowly strode away to the water dump with their empty

fantasses. The drone of a 'plane returning to its aerodrome was heard, followed by the dry staccato bursts of the anti-aircraft shells ; no heed was taken, for it was an hourly occurrence, and the boys knew from experience exactly where the plane should be to put them in the danger zone of shell-cases, "duds" and splinters.

\* \* \* \*

A clear starry night quickly developed from the short interval of twilight, and the monotonous rumble of the intermittent gun reverberations from the ridges near by gave no indication that anything unusual was afoot. The usual dank mist was rising from the wadis and valleys, and boded ill for the unfortunate wagons and convoys slowly wending on over a contrast of desolate sandy waste and green scrubby and creviced plain.

"Got those ammo wagons ready yet for the advanced gun-line ?" queried the B.S.M.

"All correct, sir. Hundred and ten shrapnel, and forty-two H.E."

"Righto ; get away as quickly as you can. You're due in not later than nine-thirty, don't forget."

It was an impressive silhouette. Wagons, pawing horses, and drivers with cigarettes or pipes on (this was all wrong !) showing up inky black against the sky. And if the team stuck in a wadi or on any of the difficult ground to traverse, ten to one it would be at some point critically near the firing line. They had driven in France along pavé roads (battered, may be), across fields and over earthworks, but—the illimitable trackless desert, the worn plains of Palestine now churned up and fallow, and the unexpected precipitous wadis, were, as a combination, incomparable in their nerve-racking difficult passage.

\* \* \* \*

Hullo ! There they go ! and a number of battery salvos crashed out with one accord. In less than a minute, all guns,

large and small, were smashing away at Hell's own game. The aim of the universe—construction and production? Pish! No time for philosophical sentiment. Let 'em go! Bang! Boom! Crash!! Drones, booms, screeches, and explosions, dull and resonating, rent the air. It was a merry and exciting game to those in the rear watching the distant crest. A lurid glare overhung the whole scene, and the brilliance of the star shells and trench flares formed a canopy in this picture of glare and blazing fire. Momentary lulls occurred in the near artillery crashing, and in this brief interlude the rattle of small arms and pop-pop-pop of machine guns was carried to us on the breeze.

Different from the days of Samson and Judah, Rehoboam and Shishak, the Crusaders and others historically associated with these parts, eh?

Gun flashes all round heralded another spasmodic crashing, and the impression of expresses rushing past was commingled with the shrieking of the field battery shells dying away to a faint whistle in the distance. Whizsssh . . . kr-rupp!! Johnny's at it as well, and Heaven help those who are coverless in such a tornado!

\* \* \* \*

Next morning. All was quiet and normal as we filed in to stables.

"Corporal, that ammo team of yours lost its way near the gun line, and the centre-driver's off-horse was shot as they waited under the bank of a wadi. Piece of shrapnel, they say. Near thing too, as the driver was crouching down by its head all the time. The infantry got the hill, you know, mined it and came back. The show went off fairly well, I think."

"Oh, and don't forget those teams for replenishing ammo to-day."

\* \* \* \*

Official communiqué; "Nothing of importance to report on the Palestine front."

\* \* \* \*

H

During the week following the attack on Umbrella Hill nothing of particular import took place in which this Battery was concerned. Apart from a great amount of hostile shelling, the line remained quiet. On July 26, 5·9 howitzers shelled the El Sire Ridge, in a nullah of which our Battery was located. The Brigade Headquarters and the heavy battery positions at the end of the ridge were shelled at intervals. Enemy aircraft were very active at this time, and an enemy battery succeeded in registering the position of the 270th Brigade guns on the left. In fact, for a few days the Taubes had it all their own way in the air, in spite of anti-aircraft guns and British 'planes. At night on the 27th Umbrella Hill was again raided under cover of an intense artillery fire. The Turks retaliated by heavily shelling the lines and reserve area.

When the main gun line was being shelled the advanced gun line (near the infantry) were generally able to 'phone back to the main gun line, and impart the joyful news that such-and-such a shell was passing overhead, and on its way. After a pause, when the burst in the rear had been heard, a solicitous inquiry would be made as to whether so-and-so's hat had been blown off, or whether the rations were undisturbed. On one occasion, when a shell actually pitched in the improvised officers' mess, Pat Turner, in the telephone pit, gleefully signalled the news back.

During August 4 and 5 the 271st Brigade was relieved by the 226th Brigade. Consequently, our Battery, which had been in action continuously since the first advance on Gaza, was now withdrawn to a rest camp in the fig groves near Deir el Belah.

The Brigade spent a quiet fortnight in the rest bivouac on the edge of the sand dunes near Sheikh Shabassi. The horses were picketed and the guns concealed under cover in a fig plantation on account of enemy aircraft activity. No doubt the best available, the camp area was a dirty one, infested with pestilent flies and fleas, whilst swarms of camel ticks attacked the horses. The heat of the sun was much

more intense in the sand dunes than out in the open plain. Cases of septic sores increased with disturbing rapidity, while in spite of all precautions sand colic among the horses became troublesome.

Even with these little drawbacks, the rest was a welcome change from the strain and the cramped conditions of the gun line, while the nearness of the Mediterranean and the freedom afforded ample opportunities for bathing parades, by which the horses benefited as much as the men. The beach would present an animated scene in the morning and evening, when the sun was not too powerful. Bathing parties from the many units in the vicinity, British, Australians and Indians, would gather at the sea to rid themselves for a short time of the clogging sand by a refreshing splash in the strong salt water. Mounted men would ride their horses barebacked into the waves to free them temporarily from the attentions of voracious flies and hard-shell camel ticks of sizes varying from that of a ladybird to a sixpence. A short barebacked canter along the beach in the hot sunshine to dry off (with only a helmet to cover our nakedness), and what more could a man want?

On August 23 and 24 the Brigade returned to the line, and reoccupied its old positions along Happy Valley at Kurd Hill (El Sire). For a fortnight the routine work of trench warfare proceeded monotonously and uneventfully. Sandfly fever, the germs of which had most probably been picked up in the rest camp on the dunes, caused a number of temporary casualties in the Battery.

It is compatible with the relative importance of the various zones that attention should have been focused on the Western Front in France; also the novelty of a modern crusade towards Jerusalem may have been worn to the stage where such a trivial sideshow could be justifiably ignored by a jaded public. But whatever opinion was held or expressed on such larger issues, there was certainly cause for righteous indignation among the troops in Palestine and Egypt when they continually learned from the old country that everyone

regarded this hazy venture as a glorious picnic. War and hardships? Not on your life. They're romping in the sylvan glades of the Holy Land, or lazily languishing on the line of communications somewhere east of the Canal. There *was* a war on, and at times as fierce in intensity as France could show. Green plains of barley were now tracked and worn to a striking semblance of Libya's own desolate waste; a broiling sun and Egypt's proverbial stifling sand clouds and fly pest discomfited one from dawn till dusk, whilst the difficulty of transport and supplies had been equalled only in similar picnics. Recreations were absent and cleanliness difficult to maintain. On this "little outing" the value of water was quickly instilled; a daily ration of one bottle and a quarter of a bucket, both of warm chlorinated liquid, found its way to each individual. If he was lucky.

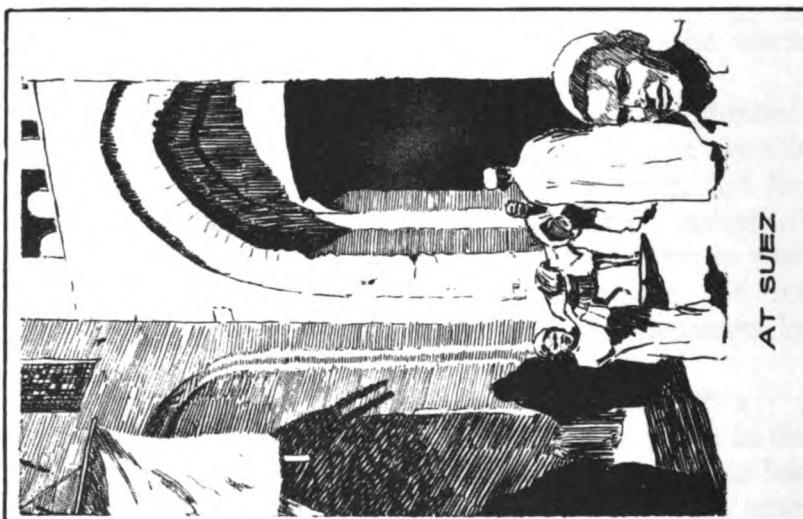
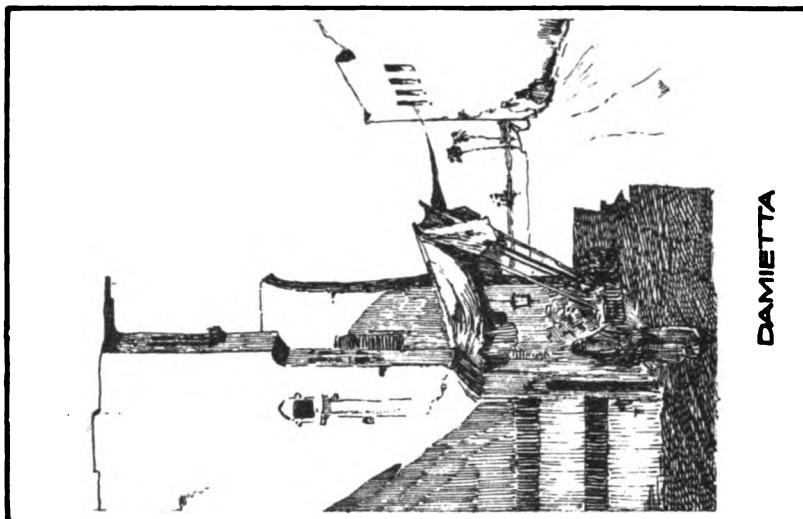
Bivouacs were visited by scorpions, centipedes, huge spiders and kindred life, and comestibles, clothes and blankets were overrun by swarms of ants. Correspondence occupying weeks in transit did not tend to remove the feeling that home was thousands of miles away.

We fear those outside the campaign did not appreciate that there was a firing line, a tenacious enemy (the Turk is one of the most stubborn fighters in the world), and the fighting and irksome interludes of an active campaign. Possibly the complacent and mistaken views at home were aided by the prominence given to topography, and the biblical and historical aspect thrown on the campaign by ecstatic reporters.

On September 11 "B" Battery was shelled by a 5·9 howitzer battery, some thirty or forty shells dropping in the gun line and nullah. The guns and their detachments had some close shaves, but no serious damage was done, apart from the loss by the Officers' Mess of a quantity of bottled beer which had only lately arrived from the canteen. It is wonderful what misfortunes can be attributed to shelling.

The weeks dragged on uneventfully. The line remained quiet and artillery activity on both sides was normal; but





heavy guns became very active towards the end of the month.

We were given plenty of time to absorb the romantic atmosphere of the land. There was not much else to absorb. To those who had a bent this way, much interest and satisfaction was derivable from studying and chatting over the ancient history of the locality. But it is to be feared, with a few at least, the subject became an obsession. A gunner recounts an incident he shared with one whom he compassionately alludes to as "Dreamer."

\* \* \* \*

My recollection is that cook's orderly was not a bad job if the work were equally shared. But on one occasion I was unfortunate in having to skin the whole issue of onions, whilst my co-orderly, Dreamer, sat on a case of bully, eyes blankly staring, apostrophising the desert, his poised knife seemingly divorced from the solitary onion waiting in vain to shed its mantle.

"To think that in the twenty-second dynasty, Shishak travelled over your same wide expanse in quest of war with Solomon's son.

"Do you know," he continued, turning to me and pointing vaguely to the distance, "that, stretching from here, cities were built for defence, and the very same line fortified by Rehoboam, who thereby so provoked Shishak, that he brought hordes of Libyans and Ethiopians and eventually besieged . . ."

"Yes, that's all very well," I interposed; "I didn't know all that, but I don't suppose Switchback had to detail orderlies for 'peadgy' peeling, and if you care to exercise that knife with a dexterous movement of the thumb and forefinger of . . ."

I could not carry on with my facetiousness. His eyes were beseeching me with a pained and rather withering look, and his quivering mouth was soon again expounding on local history.

"Eventually besieged Jerusalem, I was going to say. Palestine became a possession of Egypt, and . . ."

"Look here," I entreated, splitting my infinitive, "let me implore you to at least work as you talk. There's the dixies to scrub yet . . ."

But he was off again into the profound. Eyes glued on nothing, he addressed me through the medium of the said nothing, and at his behest I made friends with the kings of the twenty-third dynasty, primarily one Piankhi—not an ice-cream vendor, I was assured—who with his general, Tchetamenafankh (I got him to spell out this sneeze for me), put it across Osorkon III, and did other dirty deeds.

At this juncture, Dreamer had actually completed one onion, and reached for another. Ssssh! Don't stop him. But the peeling of peadgy number two was not to be *un fait accompli*.

He stopped short, and gazing away at the far landscape of barren plains, wadis, ransacked fig-groves and browsing camels, was very solicitous respecting my appreciation of the fact that this locale was immortalised by a precocious nephew of old Piankhi surnamed Tobacco (sorry, Dreamer corrected me, Shabaka), who, in the intervals between flaying people alive for a pastime, had a shot at Palestine and Syria, which appear to have indiscreetly lapsed into the autonomy stunt again in the twenty-fifth dynasty.

Dreamer turned to me, scornfully ignoring the onion I mutely extended, and plied me with the adventures of this Nubian paragon, Shabaka.

"He came of a war-like people, did Shabaka, and travelling to here, he joined forces with King Hanunu of Gaza, the Philistines, and the Israelites, and assisted the king of Damascus to combat Sargon II, the Syrian. But Sargon defeated the king of Gaza at Rafa, and Shabaka had to return to Egypt."

I meekly inquired if the Israelites ate onions, but this thrust was evidently too subtle for Dreamer, who stood up, lazily stretched himself, and sat down again with the express purpose, so it appeared, of chewing his knife handle and feeling

his left temple in a musing attitude. Oh heavens ! That dreamy look was returning.

I heard him mumbling something about Sargon's son (sounded like senna and cherubs, but was probably—I've been looking up books—Sennacherib of 705 B.C.), and Shabaka chumming up with the king of Tyre, and Hezekiah—the rotten rhyme aids my memory—when all of a sudden . . . Whiz . . . Bang !! and Dreamer was exhibiting only his nether portion from a crack in the wadi.

I do not know if he continued his dissertation to the scorpions and ants, because I was also biting the dust.

When I had recovered and had readjusted my right fibula, I gazed towards the case of bully, and installed thereon was Dreamer. He may have been genuinely dazed, or only immersed in recollections of Samsons, Joans of Arc, Omar Khayyams, and all the other stars of this milk-and-honey business, but I was soon enlightened.

"I was going to ask if you recollect the Scripture's reference to one Tirhakah, king of Kush, in Isaiah, thirty-seventh, I think ; well, he was a son of Piankhi by his . . ."

But I dashed at him.

"Look here, Dreamer. Here's an onion, and here's a knife ; dinner's at one, see ? Blow Panky, and Isaiah, and Gaza, and . . . and . . . you too !!"

And I hastily fled. Yards of ancient history, capped by a whiz-bang, had unnerved me.

\* \* \* \*

On October 14 the 271st Brigade was relieved by the 37th Brigade, and withdrew to the fig-groves near Deir el Belah. One section of the Battery was withdrawn on the 14th, the remainder on the 15th.

Preparations for the third and final attack on Gaza had been proceeding rapidly, and by this time were nearing completion. The railway had been pushed up to close behind the British front line in readiness to go through the town as soon as the Turks were driven out. Arrangements

for a plentiful supply of water were as nearly perfect as they could well be under the conditions.

The pipe-line from Egypt, which had supplied the Desert Column during the march over the desert, had now reached the trenches, and branch lines were laid to various parts of the front ; whilst the local wells at Deir el Belah had been developed by the Royal Engineers, and were giving forth a plentiful supply.

Camps and bivouacs sprang up like mushrooms in a night as new troops arrived in the area, and under cover of darkness batteries of heavy guns and howitzers, drawn by tractors, and numbers of Tanks made their way to their appointed positions in action, or concealed themselves in the fig-groves or wadis close behind the line. Signs were not wanting to indicate that a big attack was to be made on the Turks in the near future.

A new position for the Battery had been reconnoitred and selected close to Sheikh Ajlin, the extreme left flank of the British line. Among the sand dunes, it was about a hundred yards from the sea and well advanced toward the trenches. One gun ("E" sub-section) was sent into action on October 21, under cover of dusk, to register targets and prepare gunpits. Two nights later "A" and "C" sub-sections went into action ; to be followed on the 24th by "B," "D" and "F" sub-sections. For the next few days the gunners were fully occupied in registering, deepening and strengthening the pits, and camouflaging the position, also constructing pits for the reception of the large supply of ammunition which was to be stored in the gun-line.

Between 9 and 10 o'clock at night on October 26 a terrific thunderstorm burst over the opposing armies ; the vivid flashes of lightning followed each other so quickly as to appear almost continuous, while the crash and roll of the thunder and torrential downpour of rain completely subdued the noise of the bombarding artillery. About an inch and a half of rain fell in an hour or so. Dug-outs and gunpits were flooded, in many cases from bottom to top.

The following day (Saturday, October 27) the bombardment of the enemy's works on the Gaza front was officially commenced by the heavy guns, and, increasing in volume, was carried on continuously day and night. From the 30th onwards the Navy took up position a short distance off the coast, and contributed to the tremendous chorus with guns up to 14-inch calibre. It was said that when the Turks first sighted the warships steaming along the coast, there was much jubilation among them, they imagining it to be the German fleet coming to their assistance, so much in the dark had their German advisers kept them as to the true state of affairs. The navy consisted of H.M.S. *Grafton*, four monitors armed with huge guns, two gunboats and two destroyers. The bombardment reached its climax between October 31 and November 1. The Turks retaliated at times by heavily shelling parts of the front lines and back areas, but their counter battery work was not very effective. Their aircraft were very active, flying low over the positions or bombing in the neighbourhood of Deir el Belah.

Steel helmets, which had only recently been issued to the troops in Palestine, were ordered to be worn by all ranks east of the Wadi Ghuzze.

Early in the morning of November 1 the Turks heavily shelled the British line, particularly in the Sheikh Ajlin area. The 161st Infantry Brigade, which the 271st Brigade was supporting, moved to Sheikh Ajlin. Umbrella Hill was attacked by the 156th Brigade of the 52nd Division at 11 o'clock at night, aided by a preparatory bombardment. "B" Battery, which was the only battery of the Brigade to take part in this bombardment, enfiladed the front line trench of "El Arish" Redoubt. Umbrella Hill was captured without casualties. The enemy put down a very heavy barrage of all natures of guns and howitzers, particularly directed upon communication trenches at Ajlin, and the sea shore, seriously threatening the advance march of both the 161st and 162nd Brigades to their points of assembly and deployment; but by 1 o'clock the following morning the fire had died down.

Four hours after the infantry attack on Umbrella Hill (*i.e.* 3 A.M. on the 2nd), the enemy's front line trenches were treated to an intense bombardment, under cover of which the 161st Brigade (Essex) and the 162nd Brigade (Bedfords, Northants and Londons) attacked on the whole front, capturing the whole of the front line system at once. Six Tanks took part in the attack. By six o'clock on the morning of the 2nd Sheikh Hassan—the extreme right of the enemy's line—was in possession of the 5th Bedfords. Lieut. F. L. Tibbs, of "B" Battery, with telephonists, went forward as F.O.O. to Sheikh Hassan, and did invaluable work in observation and maintaining communication with the Brigade. With the exception of Rafa Belah Ridge, all objectives had been captured.

After daylight, all the batteries in the group were engaged at their highest pressure in protecting the infantry from counter-attack. The official record states that during the afternoon the enemy launched three counter-attacks; two on Sheikh Hassan, the first of which was broken up by naval and heavy artillery fire with severe loss to the enemy, and one from the direction of Crested Rock. All were successfully repulsed. The salvos of the warships were tremendously effective. Some 650 prisoners were taken and over a thousand Turkish dead were buried in the positions. The enemy also lost three guns, one Hotchkiss, twenty-nine machine guns, seven trench mortars and a large quantity of rifles, ammunition and stores.

In the evening the enemy heavily shelled the new British line and Sheikh Ajlin, and at the same time the batteries were suddenly called upon for intense bombarding fire in support of an attack on Rafa Belah Trench, which was not successfully captured. During the night an S.O.S. call brought an immense volume of artillery fire from all natures of guns and howitzers, to which the enemy replied. About midnight, orders were received to bombard the Rafa Belah Ridge, previous to an attack on that system by the 4th Essex Regiment. The Essex entered the enemy trenches and held them for over



" SHOW  
YOUR  
KITS ! "



A GUN POSITION  
OUTSIDE GAZA



GRAND MOSQUE, GAZA  
(UNWISELY USED AS AN  
AMMUNITION DUMP)



OUR  
PLACID  
FRIENDS





an hour, but were then bombed out by superior numbers, suffering heavy losses.

The following day, the 4th, the Turks heavily shelled the new front with 5·9's and 4·2's, and smaller guns. All day and all night harassing fire was maintained upon enemy trenches and back areas.

During the 5th the Turks very heavily shelled the front line area, but so recklessly, especially towards evening, that it was soon suspected that they were getting rid of their stores of ammunition as fast as the guns could fire, or the gunners serve the guns. This lavish expenditure of shells could only mean that the enemy intended to evacuate his positions. Throughout the following day (the 6th) shelling on both sides was very heavy and continuous. An attack on Rafa Belah Ridge was timed for 1 o'clock on the morning of the 7th, to be assisted by an intense bombardment, and to be followed by a two hours' protective barrage. The attack was carried out, but it was found that the enemy had already evacuated the position. The barrage was stopped, and all guns turned their fire on to roads, etc., in rear of Gaza.

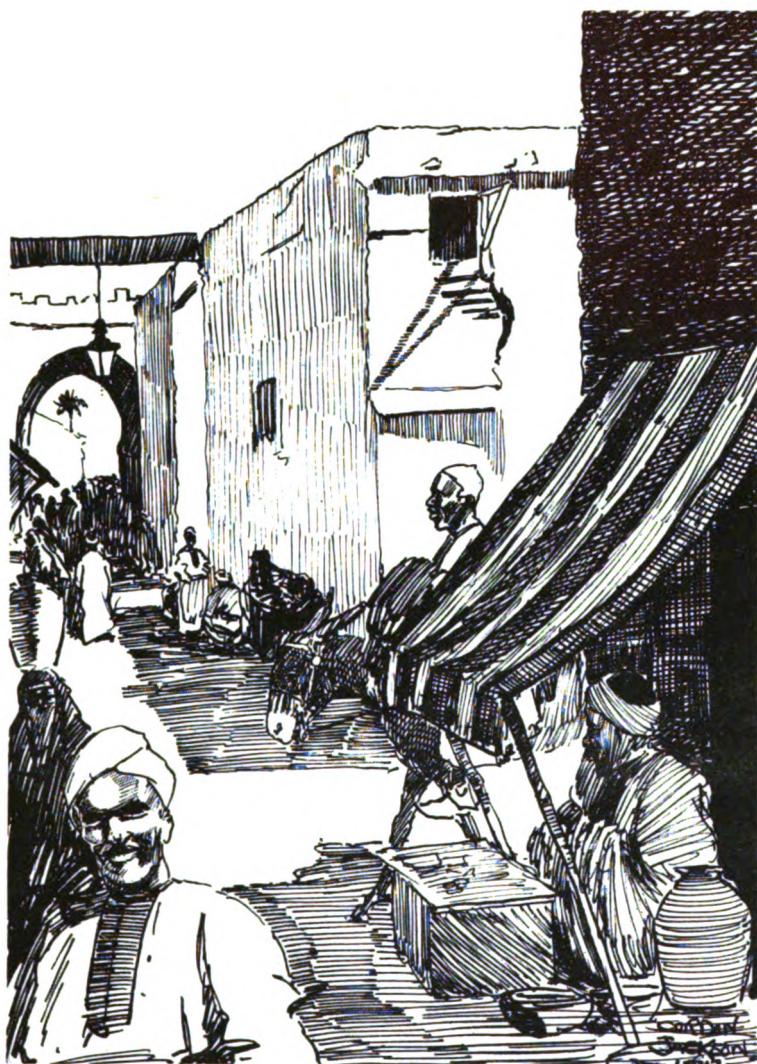
During the past eleven days the bombardment had been maintained, the Battery had been firing continuously day and night in common with all the other field batteries; an immense amount of ammunition was expended, thousands of rounds by this Battery alone. It is gratifying to note that the opinion of the Infantry Command on the artillery support during the course of the battle was "perfect"; a tribute alike to the Brigade Commander, Lieut.-Colonel R. M. Laurie, D.S.O., the Battery Commanders, Officers, N.C.O.'s and gunners and drivers.

Bombardier H. G. Robinson was here awarded the D.C.M. for bravery and devotion to duty at the last Gaza advance on November 6, when, at Sheikh Hassan, he maintained continuous communication between the Forward Officer and the Battery when all lines were being broken, as soon as repaired, by enemy gun fire. Coolly ferreting out intact lengths of stray wire in places where cover was negligible, he kept a continuous

line in going order throughout the whole proceedings. Indeed, at one time, the infantry used it as the only available line to the rear.

The consistent good luck of the Battery had stood them in good stead throughout the bombardment and strenuous fighting, only two gunners being very slightly wounded. The teams during the last five days were kept harnessed up and ready to move the guns forward at a moment's notice day and night. In addition the replenishing of the guns with ammunition was a process which taxed the endurance of the wagon line personnel to the utmost.

At 3.30 on the morning of November 7 the teams were ordered up to the gun line, and the guns withdrawn. Moving with teams of eight horses, on account of the deep sand, the Battery advanced with four guns along the beach to Sheikh Hassan, past the old Turkish Cricket Redoubt, where there was a short halt while the Brigade and Battery Commanders reconnoitred. It being evident that the Turks had retired, the Battery continued its advance, and rapidly got the guns into action under cover of Sheikh Redwan, a comparatively high hill about a thousand yards behind the enemy's front line, and which had doubtless been to them a most useful observation station. With the summit of Sheikh Redwan from which to observe, the Battery successfully shelled parties of retreating Turks and transport.



A SUEZ STREET.



## CHAPTER VIII

### ADVANCE THROUGH PHILISTIA AND INTO JUDÆA

November 7, 1917—July 21, 1918

THE distinction of being the first battery past Gaza in the chase of the retiring Turk, and to open fire on him, is claimed by "B" Battery, 271st Brigade. The enemy, however, had retreated rapidly, and their last stragglers were soon out of range of the guns.

The summit of Sheikh Redwan afforded a magnificent view of the surrounding country towards Beersheba and north of Gaza. The crown of the hill had been strongly entrenched by the enemy; the dug-outs furnished with doors, windows and furniture brought from the town. The place would undoubtedly have been a troublesome and costly position to assault, had it not been such an easy target for the heavy guns of the navy, which soon must have rendered it untenable. The dug-outs were almost unapproachable, infested as they were with fleas and other insect parasites.

As the day of November 7 wore on, many columns of the Turkish army could be observed through glasses in full retreat, and also the dust clouds of pursuing British troops towards Beersheba. Early in the afternoon the Imperial Service Cavalry entered Gaza, and, riding right through the town, continued the pursuit of the retreating enemy, encountering little opposition, except by a few isolated machine gunners, who were quickly overcome, either being killed or captured. During the morning, part of the 52nd Division had pushed along on the beach and through the sand dunes, overtaking the Turks near Ascalon, where they were preparing to make

a stand. After a stiff fight, they were driven out of their positions. The British bombing 'planes caused heavy casualties, demoralising the Turk and preventing him from consolidating a position.

To maintain the pursuit with the rapidity necessary in order to allow the enemy no time to organise his scattered forces, transport for munitions and supplies became of utmost importance. "The 54th Division remained at Gaza, and gave up all its transport to assist in the forward move, and was able to maintain itself without transport on a supply of five days' rations in depôts close at hand." Consequently, as far as this Brigade was concerned, the field of hostilities receded in the direction of Jaffa and Ramleh.

Large infantry burial parties were hard at work during the next few days, burying the dead and generally clearing up the battlefield.

The town, from which all the civilian population had been evacuated long since, was found to be in a deplorable condition. The greater part of the woodwork of the houses had been removed for use in the trenches or for firewood. Immense damage was effected by explosions of Turkish ammunition dumps collected in the mosques and public buildings, and detonated by British gunfire.

On the morning of November 14 the Battery received an unexpected order to march immediately. Owing to the absence of the divisional transport, the teams of the guns and wagons were at the time engaged in the drawing of supplies and ammunition, which caused some little delay in getting away. Marching with eight-horse teams, the Battery reached the village of El Nuzleh about three o'clock in the afternoon, after some very heavy pulling through the deep sand. Here a halt was called to rest the horses, and on resuming, good progress was made to Dir Sineid, where we arrived after dark. A train loaded with ammunition had been blown up by the Turks in their retirement a few days before, and shells of all sorts and sizes were scattered over the plain, while all that remained of the train and a considerable

length of permanent way was a mass of twisted ironwork and charred wood.

Next day the Battery marched on to El Mejdel, where it arrived late in the evening. The vicinity of the village had been the scene of strong rearguard actions by the Turks a few days earlier, and as yet there had not been time—owing to the rapidity of the advance—for the burial of dead men and horses which lay scattered in the surrounding fields polluting the air. El Mejdel was a picturesque village viewed from the bivouac a quarter of a mile or so away, its principal mosque standing on a slight eminence closely grouped round by the reddish-brown mud houses of the villagers. They were reported to be more or less hostile to the British. Nevertheless any pro-Turkish sympathies they may have had did not prevent them plying a very profitable trade in fine Jaffa oranges among the troops, who, for their part, were only too ready to barter a tin of everlasting bully for twenty or thirty oranges.

Leaving El Mejdel about 6 o'clock the following evening, we marched on in the direction of Jaffa, and after a tedious and dusty march in the dark arrived at the village of Esdud, which had been captured by the Australian and New Zealand Division on November 10. The route to the intended bivouac area lay through the crooked and very narrow village lanes ; the walls of the mud houses barely left sufficient space for the guns and wagons, whilst the road surface or track appeared to consist principally of loose boulders covered by a thick layer of fine dust, which rose in a choking blinding cloud in the confined space between the houses. Having traversed the village successfully without knocking anything over, and only rounding off a few of the many odd corners of the mud houses which projected unreasonably into the fairway, the Battery at length emerged into the fields beyond, and our little canvas sheets were soon spread between the ground and stars.

Esdud (Ashdod of the Philistines), or Azotus, is a very small and squalid village with a remarkable history. It is about three

miles from the Mediterranean coast on the famous military road between Egypt and Syria—past Gaza, of course.

It was one of the five chief cities of the Philistines, and the seat of the Acropolis and of the worship of the fish-god Dagon. The name Ashdod means stronghold. The Philistines took the Ark of the Lord to Ashdod and set it up by Dagon. They found Dagon prostrate before the Ark next morning. The priests set Dagon up again, and next morning the idol was prostrate once more, and its head and the palms of its hands were cut off on the threshold (1 Samuel v).

Then the Philistines carried the Ark to Gaza and Ekron, and plague smote people wherever the Ark went. Finally, the Ark was restored to the Israelites with offerings.

The Assyrians captured Ashdod in 711 B.C. About a hundred years later it was free from the Assyrians, and stood successfully the longest siege in history (twenty-nine years), by Psammetichus, King of Egypt. Herodotus is the authority.

Judas Maccabæus, the great Jewish patriot and general, fell in battle in 161 B.C. on Mount Azotus, which is probably the rising ground now crowned by the mosque previously referred to.

By half-past one the following afternoon the Battery was again on the move, keeping to the edge of the strip of sand dunes which extends along the coast to a depth of several miles ; and travelling through groves of orange and fig trees Yebnah was reached about 7 o'clock in the evening. The bivouac was about half a mile from the village. Yelping packs of jackals roamed around the encampment all night, and on one occasion they nearly stamped the horses by their drawn-out mournful howls, and by rushing through the lines.

Yebnah is a big village on a hill in the midst of gardens and clusters of trees. The houses for the most part are mere hovels. They are overlooked by two mosques. The first, called El Keniseh, the Church, actually occupies the site of an ancient Christian church ; its minaret dates from 1337.

Yebnah is the Canaanite town of Jebnael. Given at first

to the children of Juda, it was afterwards handed over to those of Dan, but it soon fell under the sway of the Philistines. Towards the year 800 B.C., Osias, King of Juda, took it and dismantled it. In the book of Judith it figures under the name of Jemnaa with Azotus and Ascalon among the towns which trembled at the approach of Holophernes. After that time it bears the name of Jamnia.

Judas Maccabæus, having learned that the inhabitants of Jamnia contemplated some act of cruelty against the Jews who lived within its walls, betook himself one night from the port of Jaffa, and inflicted damage (164 B.C.). Twenty years after, Simon, the brother of Judas, took the town. In A.D. 63 Pompey retook it from the Jews and united it to the province of Syria. The Emperor Augustus, however, presented it to Herod the Great.

Mention of this village brings to mind the fact that we had now been on trek from Gaza for some days, and, as was inevitable during an advance of this nature, stores ran short. Only actual necessities were available—fodder, bully beef, biscuits, and, of course, the ubiquitous 2-lb. tins of dubbin. Never was there a dearth of dubbin in the desert ; it has always been a source of wonderment, this dubbin question. Even in the most outlandish spot, the Q.M.S. could slip back his sleeves, wave his wand, and delight the eyes of Section Commanders and Nos. 1 by conjuring dubbin out of the void in sufficient quantity for an afternoon's harness-cleaning parade. It would not be surprising to learn that manna was, after all, only a species of edible dubbin.

But the greatest hardship of all was the temporary cessation of the "fag-issue." A Tommy bereft of his smoke is as forlorn as a bassinette minus its baby. During one period of "march easy," one sub-section, from its No. 1 down to the artificer-sergeant who had scrounged on to the first line wagon, were reduced to a cigar apiece offered surreptitiously out of a box "reported missing" from the remnants of the canteen stores. The army victorious !

To continue with our narrative. The march was resumed

the next day at noon (November 18), the column still keeping close to the dunes, and passing through vineyards and orchards or orange groves enclosed by giant cactus hedges or mimosa trees in full bloom, the sweet, heavy scent of which can be almost overpowering on a warm, close day, such as this one proved to be, Ayûn (or Ain) Kara (Richon le Zion) was reached at sunset. A settlement of French Jews, this little town was by far the best the Battery had encountered in their travels since leaving the Suez Canal. The townspeople were very friendly disposed to the troops, and sold them wheaten bread, although the Turks had very largely depleted their stores of flour. After three or four weeks of bully beef and biscuits, bread was a very welcome addition to the menu.

Having spent nearly a year practically, one may say, away from civilisation, and having grown accustomed to the daily spectacle of fellow soldiers clad in the universal khaki, Arabs in their national costume of soiled white robes, or the miscellaneous outfit of the Egyptian Labour Corps native, consisting largely of purloined army oatsacks and sandbags, there was something incongruous in coming thus suddenly on this small community. They were white people wearing clean European attire, and living in a small but clean and well-built modern town constructed of brick and stone.

Heavy rain fell during the night, and the men got soaked, whilst the roaming jackals made the night hideous with their nightly yelping contest until dawn.

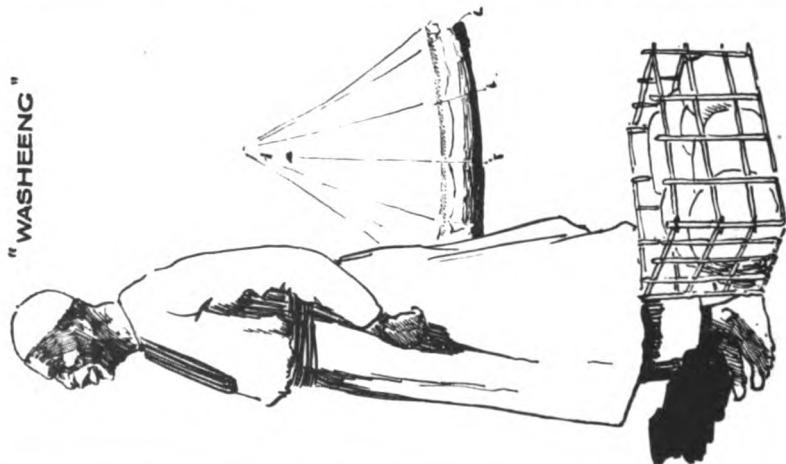
Starting at 9 o'clock the next morning, and marching in an easterly direction, the Battery reached Ludd early in the afternoon, having skirted Ramleh, and bivouacked in an olive grove just north of the village. The Turks were at this time defending a line a few miles to the north-east of Ludd, and further progress in this direction was rendered impossible for the guns by the very broken nature of the country. Since leaving Gaza the Battery had advanced about fifty miles. There was again a heavy downpour of rain in the evening, against which bivouac sheets afforded



CANAL SCENE :  
NEAR EL SHATT.



"WASHEENG"



little protection. This downpour, accompanied as it was by a large drop in the temperature, was a severe trial for troops in summer clothing, who had, until a few hours before, been suffering from excessive heat.

Ludd is a straggling native town of poor tumbledown buildings constructed for the most part of sun-dried mud bricks, with here and there a few more substantial looking edifices built of brick or stone, used as public buildings and schools, or farm buildings belonging to the Jewish settlers, and was at this period in a state of indescribable filth. An important town tactically by virtue of its position on the Turkish railway and its vicinity to Ramleh on the main road from Jaffa to Jerusalem, it had been captured by the 1st Australian Light Horse Brigade four days before the arrival of the Battery ; 360 prisoners were taken. Groves of figs, oranges, and olives surrounded the town, with here and there clumps of date palms and a few vineyards.

Ludd was known in the old days as Lydda, and the coincidence mentioned on pages 1 and 2 may now be recalled. In common with all the places hereabouts, ghosts of the past flit across its narrow streets. The rising dust caused by our column from the rapidly drying tracks assumed fantastic and dim forms of history. As New Crusaders, like our forbears of the blazoned cross in 1099, we found the city undefended, although the modern Saracens, on our approach, had not seen fit to burn down the few brick buildings, mosques and hovels, to prevent our using "the beams and woodwork of the church in making engines of war." The town was still inhabited, and the material Arabs, mingling with the phantoms of the past, were busy offering for sale native tobacco of a very narcotic sort. Remarkable opportunists, these Arabs.

The first impression of Ludd, in the occasional halts through the outskirts, was one of disorder and filth, as we passed through an area marked on the map as "cultivated." The drying mud among the melon beds, churned up by the passage of many columns before ours, and the smashed down

cactus hedges, did not relieve the aspect, which in normal quiet times was probably most picturesque. Many units had converged on Ludd, which was chosen as a centre for concentration. Although we did not know it at the time, our light-hearted victorious advance was here pulled up with a jerk at this ancient centre of Christendom, the retreating enemy having had time to dig himself in some few miles ahead.

From the very commencement of the Apostolic preaching, there were Christians at Lydda. St. Peter, we are told, "came to the saints that were at Lydda," and on this occasion he cured by a miracle Eneas, who had been confined to bed eight years with palsy. "And all who dwelt in Lydda and Saron saw it, and were converted to the Lord" (Acts ix 32, 35). It was there also that the Prince of the Apostles received the messengers who summoned him with speed to Joppa, where Tabitha had just died.

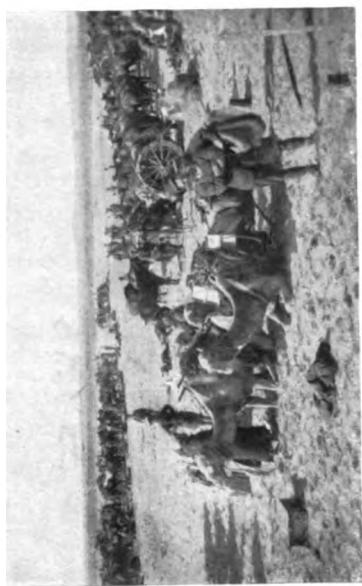
The church at Lydda is dedicated to the glorious martyr, St. George of Cappadocia. According to local tradition, which can be traced back to the sixth century, St. George came originally from Lydda, and his remains were brought back from Nicomedia to his native city. But Eusebius of Cesarea, about the year 322, relating the martyrdom of the noble soldier who confessed Christ at Nicomedia before Diocletian in April 303, neither names the saint nor mentions his country nor the place of his burial. The deacon Theodosius (530) is the first among the pilgrims to mention the tomb of St. George at Lydda.

About the middle of the twelfth century the Franks built a new church with three naves to the north-east of the first. This new church of St. George was destroyed in 1191 by order of Saladin, during his battles against Richard Cœur-de-Lion, King of England.

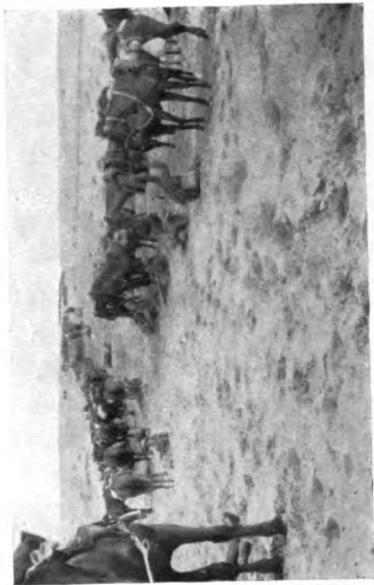
From high ground on the outskirts of the town, Bethlehem (although distant about twenty miles) can be seen quite clearly, perched high up in the Hebron mountains, and in the opposite direction the white buildings of Jaffa are just



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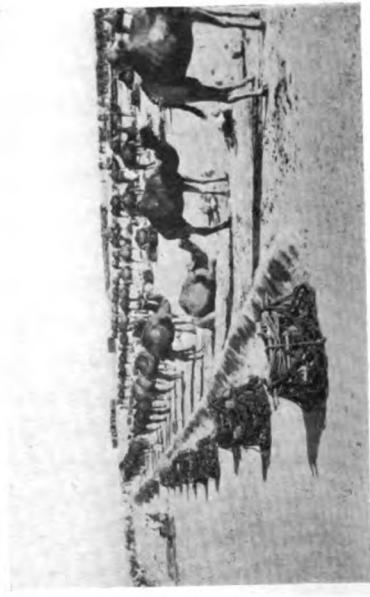
" BARRACKED " (THE EVENING BIVOUAC)



THE LONG TREK



CAMOUFLAGE



CAMEL LINES

visible above the dark green foliage of intervening belts of palms. Scattered in between lay many other villages and small towns among the hills and broken country towards Jerusalem, or on the green coastal plain—reddish-brown native villages with here and there glistening whitewashed or stone buildings of the Jewish settlers.

On arrival at Ludd the 54th Division became attached to the Desert Mounted Corps for the defence of the Ludd to Jaffa line. The enemy still held the high land at Deir el Kuddis, about five miles east of the bivouac, as well as the northern bank of the Nahr el Auja.

We remained in our bivouac in the orange grove until November 27. During this period reconnaissances were made by Brigade and Battery Commanders for future battery positions north and north-east of Ludd. As the result of reports received that the enemy were digging-in in strength a few miles to the north-east between Rantieh and Kuleh, the Battery marched away from Ludd at sunset on the 27th, and brought the guns into action in support of the infantry line in the vicinity of the village of Yehudiyeh.

Actually the position was in the Wadi Kereikah at a position over a mile in rear of a point midway between Yehudiyeh and the German Jewish colony of Wilhelma, and it proved pretty lively. The name of the wadi was unknown to the bulk of the troops, but on account of its open nature, and the enemy's persistent attention, it was soon christened. Such name will *not* be found in these chronicles. The following day, November 28, the gun line was shelled now and again, but the wagon line, grouped in a depression formed by the Wadi esh Shellal, a mile and a half behind across the flat, featureless plain, was continuously shelled. There is no doubt that enemy batteries positioned on the higher ground at Rantieh were placed advantageously, and their aircraft observation enabled accurate shooting. The Norfolk (272nd) Brigade, in the same wagon line, lost one team completely, a driver being killed outright; whilst, with us, Driver Morley was wounded, and Major Martin's horse covered with shrapnel

gashes. Several others of our horses were killed or wounded, and the wagon line was hurriedly withdrawn, retiring across the plain to the cover of some groves towards Safireyeh. Lieut. Tibbs received slight wounds.

During the excitement, Corporal-Farrier Farren was of great service in helping to get the teams calmly away, assisting drivers to hook-in, and starting teams on the right direction for the new place of assembly.

Meanwhile, the gun line was not overlooked, although Johnny's principal prize packets did not arrive until the next day—the 29th. An enemy 'plane was paying unwelcome attention to the infantry lying left of Wilhelma, and, to keep our hands in at anti-aircraft work, we fired. As he was low down at a fair range, our 18-pounders could be used with accuracy, and the Infantry Commander expressed his appreciation of the two or three bursts we got under the 'plane's tail, which sent him buzzing away. But, oh, the wages of our temerity! we were treated to a nice lot of 4·2 salvoes which, as an example of general good shooting, left nothing to be desired (from the Turks' point of view). Fortunately, everyone was able to find perfect cover, and we escaped unscathed.

The following day was a "soft" day, the Battery firing a little, and the wagon line were allowed to take their saddles off for the first time for four days.

As the Battery had been badly shelled in the half-covered Wadi Kereikah position, on December 1 a reconnaissance was made to settle a new position farther to the left, in rear of Yehudiyeh. Meanwhile, the game of "shell-out" was again played with the wagon line, and B.Q.M.S. Patience was continually on the move to new groves and pastures brown with his flock. They were shelled away when attempting to water at a rather isolated Jewish farm, having to return right back to Ludd for this purpose.

The new position was occupied on the 4th, and looked very snug. The wagon line was just in the western outskirts of Kefr Ana, within near distance of the guns behind the

neighbouring village of Yehudiyeh. The well at Kefr Ana was rather overtaxed, with all the mounted units round about, but by dint of queuing up in the narrow streets all were served in time. One horse and driver per unit was detailed in advance for fatigue at the well, hauling on a long rope, operating through primitive apparatus, to raise the water. The gun line established a useful O.P. in the open at Yehudiyeh.

Heavy rain was now falling daily, and threatened to wash the Battery out of its position, and Kefr Ana and the wadis thereabouts became reminiscent of France. The weather threatened to impair mobility, for there are no roads in this muddy clay plain. It became a most difficult and hazardous job for the ration and other teams which daily made the journey to and from Kefr Ana across the plain. The wadi crossings were few and far between, and were very slippery declivities quite dangerous to negotiate, especially with loaded G.S. wagons and six-horse teams ; it was bad enough for single mounts, and the poor floundering camels were no doubt wondering why they had ever been chosen for such a benighted country. As General Sir E. Allenby mentions in his despatch, whilst the rainy season was still in progress, and before railhead had reached the troops, the supply situation presented great difficulties. The wadis came down in spate, overflowing their banks and flooding the surrounding country. Not only was railway construction hindered, but the country became almost impassable for motor, and extremely difficult for horse, transport. Nevertheless, all difficulties were overcome.

About this period, well away on our right flank, the British army was in process of concentration for the great attack which was to result in the fall of Jerusalem and one of the most momentous accomplishments of the war. Although our own Division, the 54th, were at the time holding on and pushing on inch by inch in the coastal sector, we are nevertheless proud to have been in the field, indirectly assisting, on this memorable occasion. The process occupied from

Dec. 4 to Dec. 7, 1917, and the following is a summary from the official Record of the E.E.F.

\* \* \* \*

The 53rd Division, with the exception of the 158th Brigade and the XXth Corps Cavalry, began to move north along the Beersheba-Hebron road and reached the Bilbeh area on Dec. 6, getting into touch with the 10th Australian Light Horse Regt., which had occupied El Kudr. On Dec. 5 the enemy withdrew a little in front of the 10th Division. This enabled our troops to occupy Kh. Hellabi and Suffa, and the Australian Mounted Division also moved forward a short distance. That night the 231st Brigade of the 74th Division relieved the 60th Division in the Beit Izza and Nebi Samwil sector, and during the next night the 74th Division took over the line as far south as the Makam of Sheikh Abdul Aziz, one mile south-east of Beit Surik. At 7 o'clock on Dec. 5 patrols reported that Kefr Rut, about one mile west from Suffa, had been evacuated by the enemy. Accordingly, an hour later, the 4th Australian Light Horse Brigade and the 5th Mounted Brigade moved forward, and at 3.30 in the afternoon the 3rd Australian Light Horse Brigade occupied a line about 1000 yards north-north-east of El Burj further to the west. Thus, in the evening, the Desert Mounted Corps held a line running through a point 500 yards east-north-east of Kh. ed Daty, another point 1500 yards north of that place, Shilta, and a point 500 yards west of Shilta. This filled the gap between the 31st Brigade and the 10th Division on the right and 233rd Brigade of the 75th Division on the left.

On December 7 the XXIst Corps took over the line covering Ramleh, Ludd and Jaffa. The 75th Division had the eastern sector on the right, the 54th Division the central sector, and the 52nd Division the coastal or western sector on the left.

On the eve of the attack the Turks were holding a line covering Bethlehem on the south and running north past Ras el Balua, Ain el Hand, Kibriyan, Kulat el Ghuleh, to

the west of Ain Karim and along the formidable ridge running above the Wadi es Surar in front of Deir Yesin and Beit Iksa. It continued north to the east of Nebi Samwil to the west of El Jib and thence in a westerly direction past Kh. ed Dreihemeh, Et Tireh, Beit Ur el Foka, Kh. Ilasa, Kh. Aberjan to a point near Suffa. As a preliminary to the main attack, the 179th Brigade with the mountain batteries crossed the Wadi Surar during the night, and by 3.30 in the morning had captured the high ground south of Ain Karim. In spite of rain the main attack began at dawn on December 8. It was supported by the Divisional Artillery, the 96th Heavy Artillery Group of three 6-inch batteries—the 383rd, 387th, and 440th—one 60-pounder battery and one section of the 195th Heavy Battery, the Hong Kong and Singapore Battery attached to the 74th Division, the 10th and 16th Mountain Batteries attached to the 60th Division and the 91st Heavy Battery attached to the 53rd Division. The 60th and 74th Divisions attacked at quarter-past five, and by 7 o'clock in the morning had captured the line of Turkish trenches crowning the formidable hills to the east of the Wadi Surar. Considerable difficulty was experienced before the great Heart and Liver Redoubts and the carefully prepared works at Deir Yesin could be taken by the 60th Division. The main road past Kulonieh and up the steep ascent to Lifta was exposed to Turkish artillery and machine-gun fire, which greatly interfered with the advance of this division and the movement of its guns. The country traversed was very broken and precipitous, and the rain and darkness greatly increased the difficulty of the advance. The weather and strenuous Turkish resistance had delayed the 53rd Division, and it was only at 9 o'clock that it could get into position to attack the high ground west and south-west of Beit Jala, consequently this division was unable effectively to protect the right flank of the 60th. The necessity for securing this flank made it impossible for the 60th Division to advance as far as its right was concerned. On the left it encountered serious opposition at 1.30 in the afternoon, which was only

overcome by a bayonet charge at 4 o'clock. Further north, the 74th Division reached Beit Iksa by 11 in the morning, but was there held up by heavy artillery and machine-gun fire, and was unable to capture the El Burj ridge to the north-east owing to enfilade fire from the right. The attack was suspended, and at nightfall both Divisions consolidated the line to which they had advanced, whilst the 10th Australian Light Horse Regiment at Malhah and the 1/1 Worcester Yeomanry (the Corps Cavalry Regiment) maintained communication amid the rain and mist with the 53rd Division at Beit Jala. In the morning the Worcester Yeomanry worked right across the front of the 53rd Division and cut the enemy's line of retreat by getting astride of the Jericho road, where it turns east from the Valley of Jehoshaphat.

During the night the 53rd Division had pushed forward to the outskirts of Bethlehem, from which the enemy withdrew, and by half-past eight on the morning of December 9 the division had advanced to a line two and a half miles south of Jerusalem. The enemy, having no hope of holding Jerusalem now that his positions overhanging the Wadi Surar had been forced, made no counter-attacks during the night, but retired to a line north and north-east of the city, which was surrendered at half-past eight by the Mayor, who approached the outpost of the 180th Brigade. Major-General Shea, commanding the 60th Division, was instructed to accept the surrender, and did so at 1 o'clock.

On the morning of December 8 large numbers of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, with the remaining religious chiefs, were personally warned by the police to be ready to leave at once. The extent to which the Turks were prepared to clear the city is shown by the fact that out of the Armenian community of 1400 souls 300 received this notice. Jemal Pasha, when warned that vehicles were unavailable for the transport of the unhappy exiles to Shechem or Jericho, telegraphed curtly that they and theirs must walk. The fate of countless Armenians and many Greeks has shown that a population of all ages suddenly turned out to walk indefinite distances

under Turkish escort is exposed to outrage and hardship which prove fatal to most of them ; but the delay in telegraphing had saved the population, and the sun had risen for the last time on the Ottoman domination of Jerusalem, and the Turks' power to destroy faded with the day.

Towards dusk the British troops were reported to have passed Lifta, and to be within sight of the city. On this news being received, a sudden panic fell on the Turks west and south-west of the town, and at 5 o'clock in the afternoon civilians were surprised to see a Turkish transport column galloping furiously cityward along the Jaffa road. In passing they alarmed all units within sight or hearing, and the wearied infantry arose and fled, bootless and without rifles, never pausing to think or to fight. Some were flogged back by their officers and were compelled to pick up their arms ; others staggered on through the mud, augmenting the confusion of the retreat.

After four centuries of conquest the Turk was ridding the land of his presence in the bitterness of defeat, and a great enthusiasm arose among the Jews. There was a running to and fro ; daughters called to their fathers and brothers concealed in outhouses, cellars and attics from the police, who sought them for arrest and deportation. "The Turks are running," they called ; "the day of deliverance is come." The nightmare was fast passing away, but the Turk still lingered. In the evening he fired his guns continuously, perhaps heartening himself with the loud noise that comforts the soul of a barbarian, perhaps to cover the sound of his own retreat. Whatever the intention was, the roar of the gunfire persuaded most citizens to remain indoors, and there were few to witness the last act of Osmanli authority.

Towards midnight, the Governor, Izzet Bey, went personally to the telegraph office, discharged the staff, and himself smashed the instruments with a hammer. At 2 o'clock on Sunday morning tired Turks began to troop through the Jaffa gate from the west and south-west, and anxious watchers, peering out through the windows of the Grand New Hotel to

learn the meaning of the tramping, were cheered by the sullen remark of an officer, "*Gitmaya meiburneç*" ("We've got to go"), and from 2 o'clock to 7 o'clock that morning the Turks streamed through and out of the city, which echoed for the last time their shuffling tramp. On this same day, 2082 years before, another race of conquerors, equally detested, were looking their last on the city which they could not hold, and inasmuch as the liberation of Jerusalem in 1917 will probably ameliorate the lot of the Jews more than that of any other community in Palestine, it was fitting that the flight of the Turks should have coincided with the national festival of the Hanukah, which commemorates the recapture of the Temple from the heathen Seleucids by Judas Maccabæus in 165 B.C.

The Governor was the last civil official to depart. He left in a cart belonging to Mr. Vester, an American resident, from whom he had "borrowed" an hitherto unrequisitioned cart and team. Before the dawn he hastened down the Jericho road, leaving behind him a letter of surrender, which the Mayor, as the sun rose, set forth to deliver to the British Commander, accompanied by a few frightened policemen holding two tremulous white flags. He walked towards the Lifta Hill, and met the first representative of the British Army on a spot which may be marked in the future with a white stone as the site of a historic episode.

The last Turkish soldier is said to have left Jerusalem at about 7 in the morning by the east gate of the city, which is named after St. Stephen, but even later armed stragglers were still trickling along the road just outside the north wall, requisitioning food and water at the point of the bayonet. This is no grievous crime on the part of defeated troops, uncertain of their next meal, but is recorded as the last kick of the dying Ottoman authority in a city where it had been supreme for four centuries.

As the Turkish flood finally ebbed away into the shadowy depths of the Valley of Jehoshaphat, the townsfolk roused themselves from the lethargy into which hunger and the Turkish police had plunged them, and fell upon a variety of

buildings, official or requisitioned for official purposes, and looted them, even stripping roofs, doors and floors from the Ottoman barracks next to the Tower of David for firewood. It must be admitted that, as the Government had furnished and maintained itself almost entirely by uncompensated requisitions, the crowd was only trying to indemnify itself. But this disorder ceased as suddenly as it had arisen on the appearance of the British infantry.

\* \* \* \*

On December 14 orders were received at our Brigade Headquarters from the 54th Divisional Artillery to make a reconnaissance for artillery support of the 161st Infantry Brigade in a contemplated attack on Mulebbis (Petah Tikwah). This clean and well-ordered little Jewish village was four miles directly north of our present position, and, as it turned out, was to provide our quarters for the greater part of the period prior to the final push from the Jaffa-Jerusalem line.

At about this time our companion Battery (A/271) was heavily engaged in operations undertaken jointly by the 75th and 54th Divisions for the capture of Klibannfa Kh. Bornat and Kh. Abu Hamid, which operations were entirely successful. All the objectives were gained, and "A" Battery was in action all day, firing some 1,500 rounds. At the commencement of the fight, Major H. R. Wilson was with the Battalion Commander, observing from Tureif, Lieut. V. S. Laurie observing from the Forward O.P. under a railway culvert near Wilhelma Station and providing flank observation of much value. The Brigade Diary records that after the infantry had gained their objective Lieut. Thornton went forward to Kh. Abu Hamid, which was subjected to heavy enemy shelling. "This young officer was wounded, but displayed great gallantry, continuing to fire his battery for some hours although incapacitated from movement." During some of the periods of this fight it is interesting to note that the three different sections of the Battery all together at the one gun line were being "shot" (directed) by three

separate observing officers, and considerable effect was obtained.

The contemplated capture of Mulebbis was part of a scheme of general advance along the whole front to provide more effectively for the security of Jerusalem and Jaffa. The XXIst Corps, of which our own (54th) Division formed a part, was disposed on the left of the line, and was to advance to the line Kibbieh-Rantieh-Mulebbis-Sheikh el Ballutah-El Jelil. If this were successful, then the distance between the enemy and Jaffa would be increased to eight miles. As General Allenby's despatch of Sept. 18 states, "before either of these advances could take place a considerable amount of labour was necessary on the construction of roads and the improvement of communications. Supplies and ammunition had to be brought up, a task which was rendered more difficult by the weather. Heavy rains interfered with the progress of railway construction, and in some places washed away the existing line, while the roads became deep in mud, rendering the use of mechanical transport and camels impossible, and that of horse transport slow and difficult. The operation on the left was the first to be carried out. The chief obstacle lay in the crossing of the Nahr el Auja. This river is only fordable in places, and all approaches to it are overlooked from Sheikh Muannis and Khurbet Hadrah. At these places two spurs running from north to south terminate abruptly in steep slopes some 500 yards from the river. Before the XXIst Corps could reach its final objectives, it was necessary that the guns should move forward with the infantry. Consequently, Sheikh Muannis, Khurbet Hadrah, and the high ground overlooking the river had to be captured as a preliminary to the general advance in order that bridges might be built."

We eventually came out of action at Yehudiyeh to the wagon line at Kefr Ana on December 16, and moved on the 17th to Ibn Ibraak in the neighbourhood of Selmeh, the Battery going into action south-west of Mulebbis. It was pouring with rain the whole time, not having stopped for





days, and for the next twenty-four hours all wagons and teams were out drawing ammunition, and the Battery commenced registration. On the 19th, in both gun and wagon lines, drenching rain washed out our bivouacs, and visibility was so bad that preparation work was impossible.

Group Commanders of artillery met together at R.A. Headquarters at Selmeh to discuss the operations which were to take place on the 22nd and 23rd. The exact date could not be fixed, as it depended on the dispositions of the 52nd Division on our left. The torrential rain was incessant, and during the following day, the 20th, units of the 52nd Division crossed the Nahr el Auja and captured Muannis and Hadrah. In the miserable drenching rain of the 21st the Battery registered its creeping and protective barrages which had been arranged to cover and protect the infantry advance on Mulebbis.

At 4 o'clock next morning, the 5th, 6th and 7th Battalions, Essex Regiment, moved to their position of assembly at a point in front of the Battery positions called Z.30, and just after 8 o'clock the attack started. It was a disappointing fizzle (as a fight)—we could find little or no enemy! As a matter of fact, soon after dawn the Turk was seen retreating on the left in front of the 52nd Division; then he was seen in long columns going north along the road Ras el Ain-Jiljulieh towards the foothills about four miles across the plain east of Mulebbis. When the infantry advanced across the open, south-west of Mulebbis, no opposition was met, and the almond and orange groves were reached at 8.45. The infantry advance was pushed on, and it was soon evident that little resistance was to be encountered anywhere locally; the artillery rate of fire was reduced, and the protective barrages finally stopped. At 9 o'clock forward positions for the Batteries were reconnoitred, and our Battery was hurried into action just on the western edge of the town, the guns being pulled in column of route up a narrow soft sandy lane, and man-handled into "action-right" through the hedge of an orchard. It was not, however, possible to get

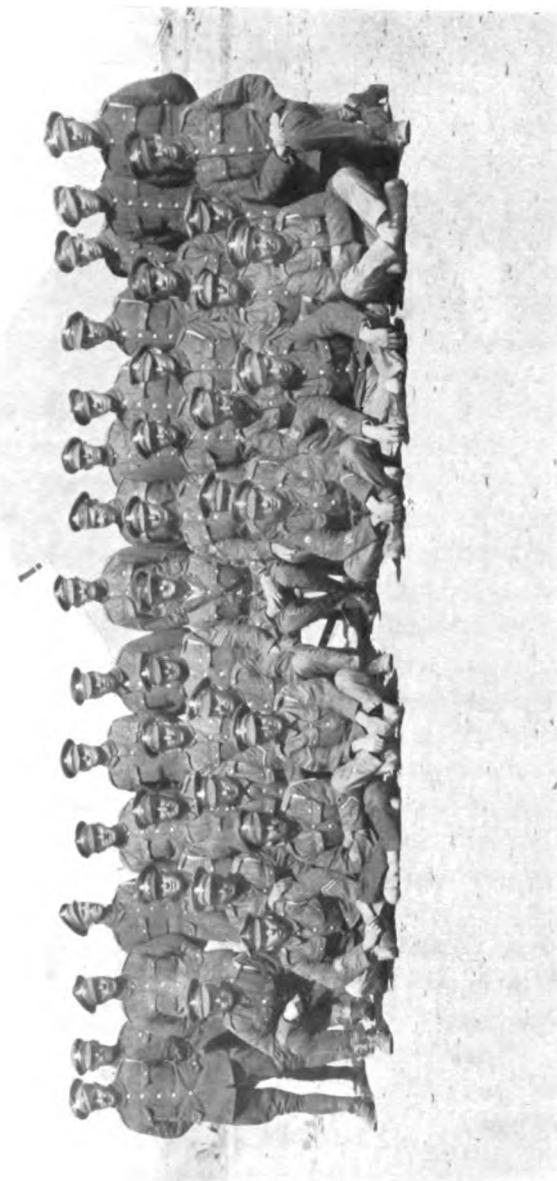
within range of the retreating column, and no rounds were fired.

During the next three or four days the forces were settling their lines and strong points, and the Battery was moved to a position near Old Mulebbis, with observation near the native cemetery. On Christmas Day, 1917 (which was still dismally overcast and wet), we were busy registering points in the zones for the purpose of providing barrage fire in the front of our line. By means of local purchase, we had a greens-potatoes-bacon dinner. The sundry local inhabitants who ventured past the dismal wagon line and peered through the hedge at the sodden drivers harnessing-up with one hand and eating their greens with the other, remembered the Christian calendar, and, with no intention of irony, wished us a "Merry Christmas." To which the lads replied "Same to you," or words to that effect.

Onwards, for some weeks in the new year, the Battery settled down to routine in Mulebbis. The weather brightened up, and the Batteries consolidated their battery positions, O.P.'s, wagon lines and communications. Our gun and wagon lines were shifted to comfortable sites with a view to more or less permanency, and cosy bivouacs or quarters were fixed up. Here and there were empty houses, orange sheds, pump houses, and other places which afforded shelter and snug quarters. There was an abundance of wood and iron sheeting available for making and patching up shelter, and of more importance—especially to the health of the troops—the orange groves were laden with ripe fruit on which, at the time, there were no restrictions as to picking. In any event, trade from the Jaffa region was impossible, so no one was harmed by depredations in the fruit groves.

Bread, olives, wine, almonds, grapes, jam, and tobacco were obtainable from the Jewish inhabitants at monstrous prices. It seemed at first as if the only recognised coin was the shilling (or five-piastre piece), and this formed the foundation for all transactions, either one, two, or more shillings being demanded as casually as an English shopkeeper asks





"B" BATTERY—AN IMPROMPTU GROUP (HELIOPOLIS, CAIRO, 1918)

in terms of pence. But in course of time things became levelled up, and the soldiers' currency assumed a value near to its Egyptian normal. In fact, the rich red Palestine wine was a genuine bargain at a shilling for a pint mug-full ; it is wonderful how our systems became gradually accustomed to this wine, to such an extent that mugs-full were in later days drunk as freely as beer in France.

Although rations and forage had been very short for the horses, there was a fair amount of good grazing, and towards the end of December 40 horses per battery were sent to a rest camp at Nebi Kunda. Some *tibbin* (straw chaff), other chaff, and grain had been procured locally, but it was only too apparent that the Turk had lived on the country, and there was not much left.

So far, the enemy had not reached our line with shell fire since the morning of the capture of Mulebbis, when one of his retreating 77 mm. batteries fired on our advanced outpost line for some hours, and the situation remained unchanged for several days. However, on January 7 our front line was shelled in the neighbourhood of Fejja (eastern fringe of the town), and on the 15th a 5·9 or 10 cm. battery shelled Mulebbis itself, causing a few casualties among the inhabitants.

The weather continued to be bad on and off, but the incessant rains of the last month or so had finished, and in the more frequent intervals of sunshine, surroundings became brighter and drier, and spirits rose. A practice series of firing with aeroplane co-operation was carried out on the 26th, but was not so successful as was anticipated owing to the observer being unable to note many of the bursts.

Ever since our arrival at Ludd on November 19 all our movements had been within a ten-mile radius of Jaffa, and now that we were settling down to a seemingly indefinite occupation of Mulebbis, many opportunities were presented for visiting Jaffa.

In arriving at Joppa (Jaffa) the British army had reached a spot rich in singularly varied associations. To the Zionist, for example, Joppa is best known as being the commercial

centre for several of the most flourishing colonies of the returned Jews, which go far to show that agricultural ability has only lain dormant in a race long dissociated from tillage. To the Freemason Joppa is memorable for other reasons, while to the tourist it is ever associated with the artificial difficulties of landing, cheap oranges, and the first sight of the Holy Land.

There is a tradition that it was at Joppa that Perseus, armed with the Gorgon's head, slew the sea-monster and rescued the lovely Andromeda from her fate. It was from Joppa also that the Prophet Jonah embarked on his celebrated voyage, and some people have confused Andromeda's unwelcome visitor with the great fish of the Prophet's adventure, and even with the dragon slain by St. George. In any case, until well into the Middle Ages, the bones of a monstrous creature were shown to pilgrims in Joppa, and Lydda drew large revenues on the strength of its reputation as the burial-place of the patron saint of England.

Joppa was also the spot where King Hiram's cedar-tree rafts were broken up and transported to Jerusalem for King Solomon's Temple. It figures too very early in Christian history, and it was while lodging at Joppa in the house of one Simon a tanner, that the apostle Peter had the vision of the clean and unclean animals.

The city played a great part in the Crusades, being fiercely disputed between the Franks and the Egyptians. It was, indeed, only due to the sea power of the Italian Republics that Joppa was kept at all. The Genoese fleet took the town in 1099, and landed invaluable supplies for the Christian army, which had just taken Jerusalem, but two days later the Egyptian fleet retook it. The fleet of Pisa won Joppa once more for Christendom in December of the same year, but after no fewer than six unsuccessful efforts on the part of the Egyptians to recapture the town it fell to an Egyptian army under Saladin's brother El Adil in July, 1187.

When King Richard fought his way to Arsuf from Acre four years later Saladin dismantled the walls, and the English

King occupied an undefended town on September 10, 1191. He rebuilt the fortifications, but in the King's absence Saladin retook it but not the citadel. Richard heard of this and attacked the new garrison from the sea. There ensued just such a fight as he loved, and by his own tremendous efforts and unequalled valour King Richard won victory for the small storming party which he led, and relieved the English castellan who still held the castle.

On Richard's departure it was, however, lost to the Egyptians again in 1197. After other vicissitudes the town for 500 years remained obscure, and very gradually revived, only to be stormed and captured by Napoleon's victorious French from Egypt as a preliminary to that *Rétour de l'Egypte* which ultimately placed him on the throne of France.

With apologies for anapaestic or other embellishment, before breaking away from Jaffa, let us sing together the Lay of Jonah :

When Jaffa was Joppa, a long time ago,  
Where oranges grow without pips,  
A ref'rence to records will all tend to show  
That men went a-sailing in ships ;  
On one that went sailing, or whaling, or nailing,  
And piling up shekels for owner,  
A man with a failing, most always prevailing,  
Was known to his shipmates as Jonah ;  
They said luck would leave them when he came on board,  
Cruel wind and bad weather assail them,  
And just what to do they were not of accord,  
The horns of dilemma impaled them.  
They held a conclave and they shortly decided  
That Jonah must go, told him so ;  
He heard them with quietude, and even confided  
He that much expected when wind 'gan to blow.

So they read the burial service, gracefully let him slide  
Into the salt wet ocean, o'er the vessel's side ;  
And, no, he was not drown'd, for waiting by the side,  
A yawning entrance gaped to a fish's dark inside ;

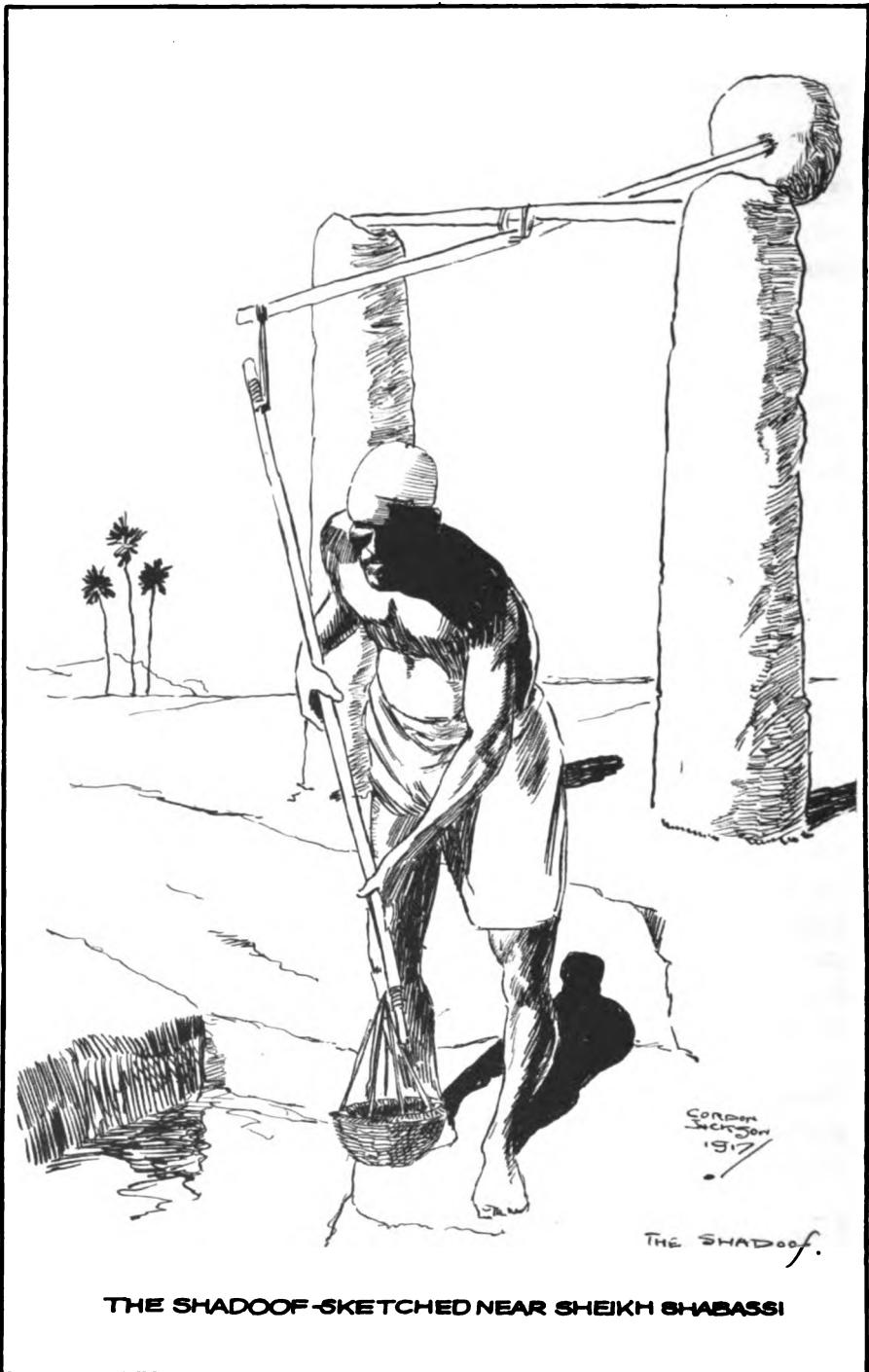
Past teeth, and jaws, down throat he sped (no race was e'er a harder),  
 He stopped, and found, on feeling round, he'd brought up in the  
 larder ;  
 'Mid seaweed, creepy things with stings beset him as he wallowed,  
 He felt so sore, behind, before, and sorry he'd been swallowed ;  
 Unlucky Jonah, here he stayed, among this vile congestion,  
 Until his size (or else his *sighs*) caused violent indigestion ;  
 Now nausea rent the whale's inside, and 'midst its qualms and  
 reaches,  
 Obtruded Jonah and the rest on one of Joppa's beaches.

The mud on the road to Jaffa in its half-dry and intermittently revived condition was terrible, and teams detailed for A.S.C. fatigue were continually pulled up for dirty harness. It was no disgrace to the drivers, who were continually working at harness cleaning, but it was one of those irritating and necessary disciplinary measures to "choke off" all and sundry and so maintain efficiency and prevent that slackness which would have become infectious in more serious directions. Saluting drill (with seasoned troops !) during periods of rest all led to the main object—to keep the units keyed up to as near perfection as possible. Falling away is so easy during prolonged periods of comparative inaction, and unless checked becomes like a cancerous growth.

Organised football matches were arranged, and the Brigade team (comprising "A" and "B" Batteries and the Headquarters' Staff) was as sound a team as could be found locally. The series of matches with the 4th Batt. Essex Regt. will be fresh in mind ; on Feb. 25 the teams drew 0-0 after sixty minutes' extra time ; on Feb. 26 the replay resulted in another draw of 1-1 after thirty minutes' extra time, and we finally lost on the following day, 1-0, after twenty minutes' extension. The football was quite up to senior amateur league standard in England, as the cumulative result proves, viz. 2-1, after over six hours' struggling.

We had plenty of opportunity of watching native and local activities, because, as far as possible, normal life was being resumed in Mulebbis, or Petah Tikwah (The Gate of





THE SHADOOF-SKETCHED NEAR SHEIKH SHABASSI

Hope), according to the Hebrew name. The occasions when the Arabs arrived at the orange groves to obtain supplies of fruit gave an interesting hour or so to the troops who may have been quartered there. To watch a bargain being struck between two Arabs is amusing to one with patience. Generally, even in the most trivial transaction, after the parties have disposed themselves comfortably, the proceedings are opened by the seller declaring an exorbitant price ; the customer protests in a lengthy harangue, introducing a discourse on the poverty of his family and the comparative affluence of the tradesman and his forebears, concluding by bidding a half or more of the price demanded. This bid is, as a matter of course, summarily rejected, but the seller lowers his demand. Again a mild altercation ensues, the prospective customer bidding somewhat higher, and the procedure is continued until both meet about halfway, whereupon the bargain is concluded. Often one or other will interrupt the development of the business by striking off at a tangent on some most irrelevant topic with the idea possibly of creating the impression that the demand will not be lowered, or the bid increased, but haggling will return sooner or later. All this is by the way to illustrate the type of customer and his methods of dealing with the Jewish proprietors of orange groves.

Siestas in shady bivouacs under the orange-trees are rudely interrupted by a noisy babble, and on looking up, a picturesque procession is observed wending its way towards the engine and well house of the grove, where business is usually conducted, and the oranges graded and sorted.

Turbanned Arabs, or maybe nomadic Arabs clad in burnooses (flowing white-hooded cloaks), many women, children, donkeys and camels constitute the assembly. The men hereabouts are usually dressed in coloured rags with an outer garment of sackcloth or roughly woven material like an inverted sack with arm-holes and neck opening, and many rejoice in footwear, either native shoes (*markoob*) or old discarded army boots cut down into slipper form. The women's patched-up rags comprise what may be termed a

shirt, trousers of coarse linen narrow at the ankles, corresponding to the *shintiyan* of the Egyptians, an outer garment, and head covering, or merely the outer garment (which has a vee-neck to a degree of vee which would cause comment at home) with the shirt affair missing. This outer garment is girdled by a sash or scarf about the waist to constitute a pouched blouse and skirt, usually looped-up—both admirable places to conceal ill-gotten oranges or other articles owing their possession to the deftness of the possessor's fingers.

The children are dressed in anything from a khaki hand-kerchief to a plurality of army grey-backs.

As for the animals, whether donkey, ass or camel, they all seem to be bony, galled, cruelly underfed and overworked, and mangy—this from casual observation. It is a fact that they are forced to carry staggering loads. A donkey wears its "pack saddle" of stuffed sackings and thongs and string, upon which are tied two huge bags of oranges, possibly three or four hundred, one on each side, and it is not uncommon to see them stumble and collapse. In addition their journey of many miles to the grove is not without burden, the Arabs riding wherever possible, whilst, as everywhere in Egypt and Palestine, the women walk.

After arrangements for the purchase have been concluded, the counting proceeds in a precise monotone, whereupon unemployed members of the caravan carry on a ceaseless noisy babble and intermingle with the legitimate orange handlers, asking for *backsbeesh* oranges, all the time concealing others when the distracted proprietor's attention is diverted. They are unceremoniously hunched back (kicking oranges from the pile with them), but are soon again interesting themselves in the affairs, children being the most irrepressible. An orange vendor allows for two hundred overplus in this manner for every hundred he sells at, say, five piastres (one shilling). Upon completion of each sack a most vociferous outpour is made by the Arab assisted by female relatives or friends, but it is merely a demand for the inevitable *backsbeesh* of one or more oranges.

When the settling-up moment arrives, the buyer starts away one small coin at a time, endeavouring to foist Turkish or other worthless money on the seller, and frequent recourse is had to the English onlookers to settle a dispute as to the value of a coin, implicit faith being put in the soldiers' decision.

The number of oranges transported by such a party of Arabs passes belief. In addition to the loads of the animals each woman carries about a third as much as a donkey's load well balanced on her head, every child has a bundle proportionate to its size, whilst the men occasionally deign to carry against the backs of their heads a small bundle supported by a sling round their foreheads. It seems as if there are fifteen or twenty women and girls to every man, who must bring all his own four wives and borrow those of his neighbour for the occasion. And each and every one, especially the women and children, does not forget to tarry *en route* past the unit's cookhouse to declare his or her "miskeenness" (*Ana miskeen*—I am poor or destitute) and beg for permission to ransack the swill tubs.

As with most units who were established in one place for a long time, a Battery Concert Party was formed, and in combination with the "A" Battery party a really fine concert was given on February 23.

A diversion from the daily routine occurred during the early days of February; the Jews were busy getting the ground under cultivation again, and a happy thought of the local command was to lend horses for the day to inhabitants to assist them in ploughing, all their own horses having been taken by the Turkish army. Single draught horses with long traces, and a driver apiece, soon got into the knack, and the services were much appreciated. The drivers enjoyed the change from the miscellaneous recurring fatigues of artillery life.

About the end of February, plans were being discussed to advance the line in our sector to a depth of about four miles, which advance was to include the capture of Mezeirah, Kh. Dikerim, Mejdel Yaba and Ras el Ain. Captain A. D. Hough

of "A" Battery carried out a reconnaissance in the neighbourhood of Fejja, and on the 27th the C.R.A. made a reconnaissance of Long Wood, a belt of trees on the forward bank of the Wadi Abu Lejja, a mile and a half north-east of Mulebbis towards El Mirr. This was decided on for an advanced Brigade position, commanding Mejdel Yaba at a range of 6000 yards, and the roads and tracks leading down the northern slopes towards Jiljulieh and Kefr Kasim in the foothills. There was a splendid strip of flat ground under cover between the wood and the wadi, and it was altogether an ideal artillery position. For the next few days there was no change in the situation, Mulebbis being slightly shelled on the morning of the 5th.

Here we have to note the sad death of the Adjutant, Captain A. A. Brown, suddenly, of heart failure, at Divisional Headquarters on March 4.

Wire was laid to the advanced Battery positions at Long Wood in readiness for the operations on Mejdel Yaba, and an alternative position was fixed for our own Battery. Mulebbis was again shelled, fairly heavily, during the night, and on the following day, March 11, the Headquarters and "A" and "B" Batteries of the 271st Brigade moved after dusk to the advanced battle positions. Many others of the Divisional Artillery units were lying alongside.

At 6 o'clock the next morning, the entire No. 2 R.A. Group, which included our Battery, opened a surprise bombardment on Mejdel Yaba, the 195th H.A.G. assisting. The bombardment lasted ten minutes, and was continued for periods of two minutes each at intervals until 9 o'clock. The 162nd Infantry Brigade had meanwhile captured Mezeirah and Kh. Dikerim, and the 75th Division on their right had captured Deir Ballut. At 12 o'clock another bombardment was carried out for a quarter of an hour on Mejdel Yaba, and for ten minutes on Sh. Baraz ed Din, the 1/10 Londons following up and capturing both places without much opposition.

The enemy were utterly demoralised by our artillery fire throughout, which was very accurate and deadly. The casualties of the infantry at Mejdel were estimated at under ten,

whilst the Long Wood screen effectually concealed the artillery. One or two enemy batteries between Kefr Kasim and Jiljulieh, firing at ranges of 8,500 or over, did concentrate for a time on the wood itself, but all we received was the backwash and overs. C-sub's detachment (Sergt. Lucas), having finished their series for the moment, had retired to the cover of the wadi, and during this pause, fortunately, one of the best-placed enemy bursts happened. From the wagon line in the distance it looked as if the whole gun and detachment were blown sky-high, but it transpired that the burst was just to the left of the trail, and sent up a shower of loose equipment, shell cases, earth and spades. The wagon was badly scarred, and subsequently needed the attention of the A.O.D., and it was found that a chunk of shell had penetrated through the side of the wagon, through the shell receptacles, and had brought up with a considerable chipping of an H.E. shell which still calmly reposed.

During the night the Battery was drawn out and returned to its original position.

During the 13th new night lines and barrages were registered, and on the 14th the registration continued, and the work of preparing the new alternative position for our Battery was carried out. The move to the new position was subsequently effected a month later (viz. April 18-19). Sometime towards the end of March, an Investiture of Decorations by H.R.H. The Duke of Connaught, representing H.M. The King, took place at the Jewish Agricultural College, Tel Aviv, Jaffa, and the town was *en fête*.

Nothing of importance occurred to add salt to the dish of mundane routine until March 31, when there was heavy enemy shelling on the front on our left, and also the newly captured Mejdel Yaba was shelled by batteries apparently hidden in the Wadi Kanah. The concluding days of March were notable for a recurrence of the heavy rainstorms and low temperature.

About this time the despatch of troops to France and the reorganisation of the force prevented further operations

of any size anywhere in Palestine, and—according to official records—rendered the adoption of a policy of active defence necessary. At the beginning of April the 52nd (Scottish) Division embarked for France, its place being taken by the 7th (Meerut) Division from Mesopotamia. We were sorry to lose the seasoned Jocks, whose Division had fought by the side of the 54th often in the past. Our own Battery received one or two remounts (horses and mules) left behind by them.

The 74th Division (replaced by the 3rd Lahore Division) was also despatched abroad. Many Yeomanry Regiments, Siege Batteries, British Battalions, and M.G. Companies were also withdrawn and transferred to the European front, and replaced by Indian Cavalry Regiments and Indian Battalions. The latter had not seen service during the present war; and, naturally, had not the experience of the battalions they replaced.

In the early days of April, 1918, forward gun positions were prepared, ammunition dumped, O.P.'s made, telephone wires laid out, and all necessary preparations completed for offensive operations. A bridge was constructed over the Auja. Later, however, the operations were postponed and finally abandoned, and all advanced ammunition dumps cleared and returned to D.A. Column. The move of our Battery to its new position was completed on the 19th, and on the 22nd, from this new location, we registered a barrage on the 7th Indian Division front on our left. Later on the Mukmeh barrage was carefully registered, checked, and trails pegged out to facilitate speedy switches.

Apparently our Command was anticipating enemy activity, possibly on account of our fresh troops facing them, because orders were received on April 26 to reconnoitre switch-line positions for the Battery, and it became generally known that an enemy attack was expected in the near future. During the last days of April there was general activity in making defensive preparations. In May an atmosphere of tenseness prevailed, and especially was it thought that things were

approaching a climax when, on May 18, the inhabitants of Mulebbis were ordered to evacuate to Jaffa within a week.

We pulled out a single gun on the 25th and mounted it in a position well forward near the Auja, and fired a number of rounds at grazing parties, grass cutters and transport between Jiljulieh and Bir Adas. This gun fired many more surprise rounds the following day, and then was withdrawn at night. Later on, the Battery fired a quantity of smoke shell into the long grass near the enemy lines in an endeavour to set it on fire, but apart from smouldering observed an hour afterwards, it was unsuccessful.

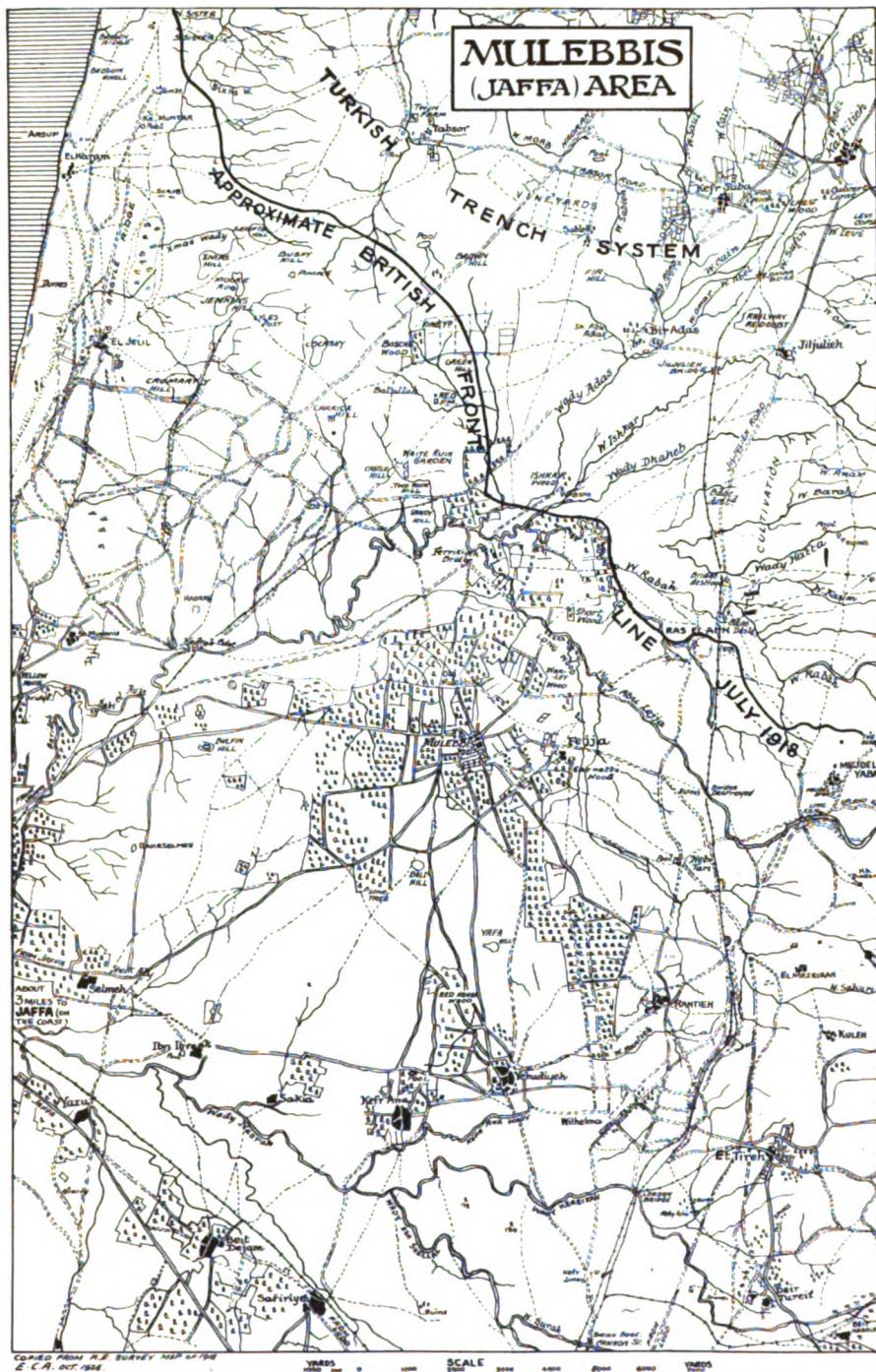
All told, this was an uneventful month, very quiet in our particular sector, although there had been considerable artillery activity on both flanks.

June provided no surprises, and ideas of a Turkish attack gradually faded. As a matter of fact there was a small advance the other way on our left flank, 150 prisoners being taken. Battery concerts came into swing again, various hobbies and recreations progressed from chess-playing to entomology and polo under the auspices of Bombardier Andrews and Lieut. Dixon respectively, and it looked as if we were fated to sit down and wait for the war to be won by detachments from Kansas City, Oklahoma, etc. To relieve the ennui, tractors periodically stripped up the Battery communicating wires to Headquarters, and all-night relaying was a fatigue eagerly sought after by the Battery staff—perhaps. At the approach of Quarter-day, we received notice to quit, and prepared to hand over to the new tenants—gunners of the 7th Division. The Battery finally handed over on June 30, and marched out to an area well in rear in the neighbourhood of Sakia, where a day's halt was called. Thence to Surafend for a fortnight's stay alongside the Ludd-Jaffa road. Football was played, the 6th and 7th Essex being beaten 2-1 and 2-0 respectively, and an epidemic of fatigues spread like the plague; mostly ammunition humping at Ludd.

On July 16 the Battery left Surafend late in the evening for the reserve divisional area near Ibn Ibraak, and had not

been there a week when news arrived that we were to pack up for Jericho and the Jordan Valley. The news was not received with unmixed feelings ; to some all moves and treks were irksome, but to most the chance of passing through Jerusalem to Jericho and the Jordan was not one to be missed for anything. The whole 271st Brigade was not to be taken, but a complete brigade was formed on the 21st, consisting of H.Q. 272nd Brigade (Lieut.-Colonel W. A. B. Daniel, D.S.O.), A/272 Battery, B/270 Battery, and ourselves, B/271. At the time it was difficult to appreciate any object in extracting stray batteries from one end of the line, despatching them to the Jordan Valley, where—as it turned out—they made various demonstrations, and returning them to their respective Brigades after five or six weeks.

Doubtless this to-and-from move was a part of the scheme, in combination with other units, to pave the way for the big break through in the coastal plain. The official despatch states “ The main difficulties lay in concealing the withdrawal of two cavalry divisions from the Jordan Valley, and in concentrating secretly a large force in the coastal plain. To prevent the decrease in strength in the Jordan Valley being discovered by the enemy, I (*i.e.* General Sir E. Allenby) ordered Major-General Sir Edward Chaytor, K.C.M.G., C.B., A.D.C., to carry out with the Australian and New Zealand Mounted Division, the 20th Indian (Imperial Service) Infantry Brigade, the 38th and 39th Battalions Royal Fusiliers, and the 1st and 2nd Battalions British West Indies Regiment, a series of demonstrations with the object of inducing the enemy to believe that an attack east of the Jordan was intended, either in the direction of Madeba or Amman. The enemy was thought to be anticipating an attack in these directions, and every possible step was taken to strengthen his suspicions.” In support of the relation between our move and this strategy it is notable that all moves inland from the coast were made in broad daylight, whilst the return stages (landing us back on Sept. 2) were by night.





## CHAPTER IX

JORDAN VALLEY—ADVANCE THROUGH GALILEE—CAIRO

July 23, 1918—December 1918

### NEW CRUSADERS

Guns are coming, 'planes are humming,  
Subs a-bawling out command ;  
Tinkers, tailors, clerks and sailors,  
Marching through the Promised Land.

Along the road with rifles trailing,  
Keeping step to hair-comb band,  
Non-afraiders, New Crusaders,  
Plodding through the Promised Land.

Over tops, or through traverses,  
On the fire-steps, tense they stand ;  
Punchers, preachers, over-reachers,  
Blasting through the Promised Land.

Pith-hat darlings, bare-legged sonnies,  
Pressing on at War's demand,  
Grouse and grumble, never stumble,  
Clumping through the Promised Land.

Crumps and whiz-bangs, death retailers,  
Bring about no countermand ;  
Forward ! Gunners, guns and trailers,  
Forward through the Promised Land.

Smiths and Ryans, Browns and Burkes,  
Pushing back the wily Turks ;  
Carrying on with shouts, begorras !  
Holy places ! Holy horrors !  
New Crusaders—just the brand,  
Encompassing the Promised Land.

WE are trekking through the heart of the Holy Land! Through an indescribable scene of fascinating contrasts, our course is slowly wended from Egypt on past Gaza, Esdud, Ascalon, and Ludd to Jerusalem. And then? The Golden City itself with its Holy Sepulchre, Jewish Temple, and Rock sacred to the ascent of Mahomet dwells in an atmosphere of conquerors innumerable; Turks, Romans, Moslems, Macedonians, Persians, Syrians and others have faded into history, giving place to the army of which we are a part. To thousands of the untravelled from workshop and office the events of the Bible are poured out in a bright recollection aided by the wealth of actual scene on every side. Deserted sites with scattered mud-huts, wells, ruins and groves cause quiet thoughts not usually credited to an unthinking crowd.

What a relief to forget the hot parched desert, to gaze on meadows, groves, grazing cattle and a rural aspect actually relieved by hills and mountains! and then there are trees and hedges, yes, and real lanes, shady, quiet, and tranquil. Sweet-smelling mimosa is in profusion, whilst on the meadow-land, poppies, forget-me-nots, anemones, tulips, and all the wild-flowers of England's pastures tone Nature's carpet and scent the air.

And then in the next day's trek this is all lost. Barren land and wild, rugged and bleak hills become our share. Contrast upon contrast.

The Eastern picture of a group of Bedouins and camels seems singularly out of place, but it is a land of incongruities. Surmount a crest, a typical knoll of the Sussex Downs, and home-ingrained Nature gives place to that weird, unfathomable, boundless Nature so little within the realisation of us city-penned folk. Emerson's words are peculiarly applicable:

The day, immeasurably long, sleeps over the broad hills and warm wide fields. To have lived through all its sunny hours, seems longevity enough. The solitary places do not seem quite lonely. At the gates of the forest the surprised man of the world is forced to leave his city estimates of great and small, wise and foolish. The knapsack of custom falls off his back with the first step he makes into these precincts.

Here is sanctity which shames our religions, and reality which discredits our heroes. Here we find nature to be the circumstance and judges like a god all men that come to her. We have crept out of our close and crowded houses into the night and morning, and we see what majestic beauties daily wrap us in their bosom.

Miles away may be seen a large native village and mosque minaret ; a broad wadi disappears away on the silent plains, and a thin drab strip, possibly miles in width, reminds one that the intruding desert still invades fertilisation in many spots. As a background to this scene, the Hills of Hebron loom up in a variety of shades from sombre grey to bright tints broken here and there by sharply defined black, where the glorious sun in a divine sky throws shadows from the fleecy clouds and crests.

We have lived in orange groves, date groves, almond groves, fig groves, olive groves, passed through Jewish agricultural settlements bounded by plantations of eucalyptus trees, and, now and again, have met civilisation once more. Yet there seems to be a sharp line of demarcation where habitations, streets, and the handiwork of man abruptly cease, and the wonderful country opens out again in all its mystic glory.

War in such a region seems a perplexing misfit ; war is altogether anomalous where Nature is omnipresent. Yet the utter incongruity of the whole affair suggests a link with the Infinite.

And now we are off right to the heart of the Holy Land—to Jerusalem itself ! At this late time of writing much of the incident of our campaign is lost in the haze of memory, but July 23, 1918, will always stand out clearly as a red-letter day, the day of our march out of Surafend towards Jerusalem, Jericho, and the Jordan.

The first day we made a short move to Latron, at the foot of the Hebron Hills, where we arrived at 1.30 in the afternoon, and formed camp. The area had been taken on Nov. 17 and 18 previously, when the Australian Mounted Division had executed an outflanking movement which compelled

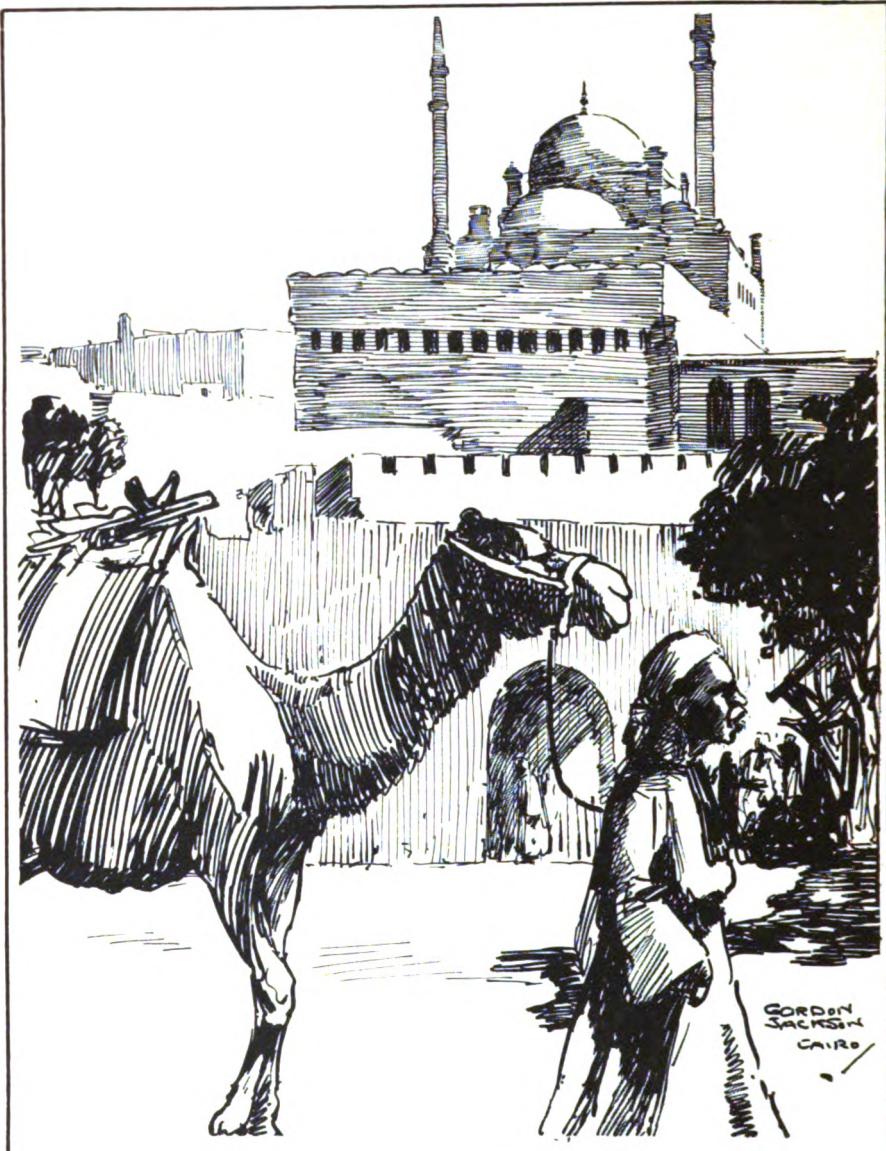
the Turks to evacuate Amwas and Latron during the night, and the Yeomanry Division forced its way into the hills to within two miles of Lower Bethoron (Beit ur et Tahta). From Latron, the main road to Jerusalem begins to rise at this point and enters narrow defiles flanked by precipitous and rock-strewn heights. On these, in the past, the enemy had constructed a series of defences commanding all approaches. Our artillery then had few positions from which the infantry could be assisted, but the available few were utilised to the utmost and the advance of the Yeomanry Division was pressed forward. The experience of the Ghurkhas and Indian Frontier troops in mountain warfare had proved of great value during these operations. As the road had been destroyed by the Turks in several places, the problem of getting the guns up the pass was one, at that time, of considerable difficulty, the more so as heavy rain had set in. The difficulties our troops had in the November advance must have been stupendous ; the downpour, accompanied as it was by intense cold, was a severe trial for troops in tropical clothes without greatcoats or blankets. In spite of it the troops worked splendidly, and took such rest as was possible in the rain among the rocks.

The road was now in fine condition for wheeled traffic, although involving many hard pulls up inclines, and around tortuous bends. On July 24 we arrived at Enab, a wooded summit which had been in view since the early hours of our journey on the previous day—a black blob on one of the far crests.

Enab is the celebrated Cariathiarim (Kirjath-jearim) of the Bible. The City of the Forest, or City of Baal, was one of the principal cities of the Gibeonites (Jos. ix 17). We arrived here at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, but after having unpacked had to re-pack and move on a further two miles nearer water. A small village could be seen on the right on a conical hill.

The following day was given to a hard 20-mile march, very disappointing from the fact that we went through Jerusalem without an opportunity for visiting, though on





SCENE IN CAIRO  
(THE CITADEL IN BACKGROUND)

our return on August 30 the exigencies of war were not so pressing as to prevent a day's tarrying.

After crossing a stream by a bridge the small village of Beit Nakuba was passed on the left, and we turned across a fertile valley. Then followed a couple of miles of ascent and descent to a spot where, away on the left, about three miles distant, Nebi Samwil, the highest mountain (2942 feet) was clearly seen. Here we descended by numerous zigzags necessitating great care for our six-horse teams and limbered vehicles around the hair-pin bends which seemed to be rounded off angles of about forty-five degrees.

Kulonieh was next seen on the left at the bottom of the Valley of Sorec. Soon we were opposite Lifta, a village perched on the side of a mountain. Soon after Lifta, the suburbs of Jerusalem commenced, and in a few moments we saw on rounding a bend the Convent of the Holy Cross on the right, and on the left the golden Russian tower on the Mount of Olives. Houses and other buildings hid most of the memorable edifices in the walled city, and the dome of the Holy Sepulchre and that of the Mosque of Omar were not in sight.

We continued through a Jewish colony, turning away on the left-hand road parallel with the Damascus wall towards the Anglican Bishop's House, and stayed just long enough to water and feed.

A big march was still in front of us ; turning on to the road skirting the eastern wall of Jerusalem alongside the Valley of Jehoshaphat, we entered the Jericho road. St. Stephen's Gate and the Golden Gate were passed on our right, while across the Valley on the far slope was the Garden of Gethsemane just in front of the Russian Hospice.

The road now descended along the torrent of Cedron, passing the Mount of Olives, and turned off to the east. El Aziriyeh (Bethany) was next passed—a confused mass of houses built of stones mostly taken from ancient religious houses—which contained the tomb of Lazarus.

On and on the road wound on the side of hills, down

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through valleys from fertility to barrenness, until we descended to Talaat ed Dumm, near which is Khan Hathrunat, in the court of which some splendid fragments of ancient walls and mosaics can be seen. Tradition places here the Inn where the Good Samaritan handed over the wounded man to the inn-keeper (Luke x 30-37). It was a large wild area of stones and boulders formed by a table-like recess in the hillside which was selected as our halting-place when we arrived about midnight on July 25. And we slept soundly on our bed of stones.

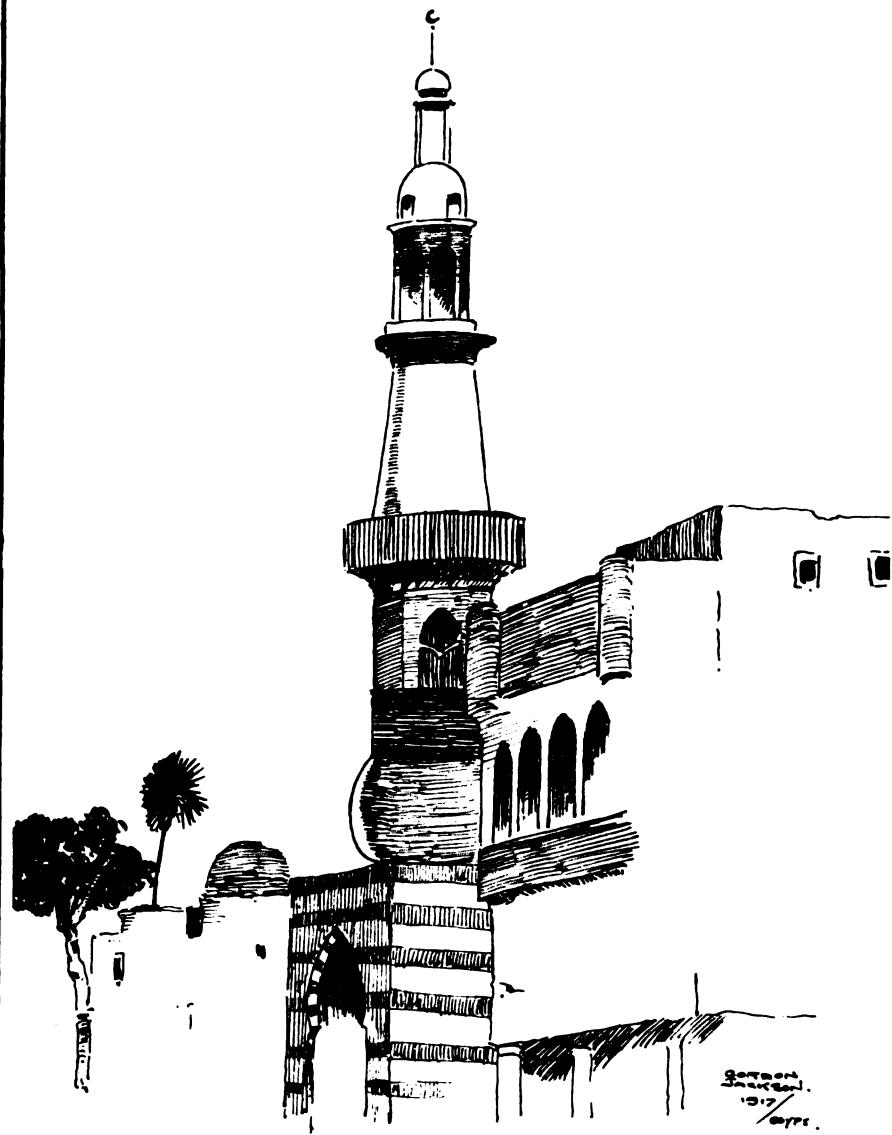
At about 9 o'clock the next morning we continued the march to Jericho, and soon the slopes were for the most part descending, until we came down below the level of the Mediterranean ; in fact, many of the high hills hereabouts were themselves below sea-level.

Emerging from the hills, we entered the Jordan Valley, making for Jericho—a patch of palm trees in the distance, and encamped outside its “walls” under the Mount of Temptation, where according to tradition our Saviour kept His fast for forty days in one of the caves. It was on the top of this same mountain, now crowned with a monastery, that the Devil took Him to tempt Him by ambition.

So this was the Jordan Valley ! A dusty, arid waste some fifteen miles wide between the Judæan Hills and the Cliffs of Moab, longitudinally divided into two barren expanses by the river Jordan. Here and there, especially near the river, the plain was creviced, and deep precipitous depressions of white limestone and gypsum took the place of the fairly level wilderness. The plain was whitened and dusty with salt and gypsum, and stiff scrub grew in patches.

During the rainy season, the clayey soil, impregnated with plaster and salt, becomes so sodden that it is impossible to traverse it except with the utmost difficulty. At the time we were there, however, it seemed nothing but sun-bleached limestone dust, and a stifling atmosphere. Riding northwards parallel to the river across the scorching plain, in the blinding glare of a remorseless sun, a track had to be chosen





**COMMON TYPE OF MOSQUE**

amidst the spiky scrub, dense in places. Scattered about were whitened skeletons of horse and camel and stinking carcases. Alone in this expanse one chances upon a grave with the simple indication "Killed in action."

On the banks of the Jordan there were compensations. For the greater part of its sinuous length it was belted with a profusion of vegetation. There were regular jungles of trees of all kinds of graceful shapes and most varied hues. Willows, acacias, tamarisks and poplars raise themselves to prodigious heights, and at their feet abound aquatic plants, amongst which is distinguished the reed of Jerusalem, a kind of bamboo with blossoms. In places this thins off into a thick profusion of shrubs, and soon vegetation is no longer represented except by thin tufts of heather.

Jericho had been captured on February 21 by the 1st Australian Light Horse Brigade, following the fighting by the 53rd and 60th Divisions astride the road we had just left from Jerusalem. During this fighting progress was only possible, in places, in single file along tracks which were under accurate artillery and machine-gun fire. The 180th Brigade had successfully stormed Talaat ed Dumm, above the Good Samaritan's Inn, on February 20, although support from the 179th had been seriously delayed on account of the surpassing malignity of the terrain.

In taking Jericho, the Australian Brigade passed through the gorge of the Wadi Kumran, about 8 miles south of Jericho, and reached the Valley on the north-western shores of the Dead Sea. It took up a position along the Wadi Jofet Zeben near by, and on the morning of the 21st started north across the slimy marl plain, and reached Jericho at half-past eight.

We only stayed at Jericho during the remainder of July 27, and on the next day went into action on the banks of the Jordan at Ghoraniyeh. Here was a bridgehead which we were covering, but our occupation of this position was only until August 2. It was most unhealthy in this green belt, especially during the dank, clammy evenings, which brought out swarms of mosquitoes, and sickness was rife. But the

position had presented many with the opportunity of bathing in the Jordan, although this required great prudence on account of the rapidity of the current and of the dangerous whirlpools.

On August 2 we moved to a new position away from the river, and carried out much registration during the three weeks of our stay. Towards the end all outposts were registered, including our own O.P. with Lieut. "Dan" Wright near by. He was, against his own inclination, in a splendid position to observe and report on the accuracy of the bursts.

On August 26 and 27 our Battery was relieved by the Ayrshire Battery, R.H.A., and we returned to the neighbourhood of Jericho. We observed many encampments and horselines standing all deserted and empty. As it turned out, they served the purpose of misleading the enemy, who were in entire ignorance of the fact that troops were pouring out of the Valley to the coastal sector. In some horselines, even dummy horses were rigged up by blankets secured to a wooden framework.

We arrived back at Jericho at 2 A.M. on the 28th, and after much bustle and movement during the day left at 7.30 in the evening, leaving the camp with all its tents standing, and arriving at Talaat ed Dumm at midnight. We left Talaat ed Dumm at about 8 o'clock on the evening of the 29th, and arrived at Jerusalem in the early hours of the next morning. The exhilarating climate of the hill tops, with its clear sky and soft breezes, was a welcome relief from the oppressive closeness of the Valley, 1200 feet below sea-level.

During the day parties were allowed to visit the city inside the walls, where various ministers were only too glad to guide us from the site of the Praetorium near the Mosque of Omar, along the Via Dolorosa to the most sacred spot in the whole world, the holy hill Golgotha, now enclosed within the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre.

In the morning we packed up, and moving along the same road past Lifta and Kulonieh, stopped again at Enab, leaving

the next day for Latron, after which we finally arrived back at Surafend at midnight on September 1.

We now rejoined our own, the 271st Brigade, at Ibn Ibraak, and prepared for the great September advance.

Before we come down to our own Battery's part in this great operation, it will first be useful and interesting to give extracts from the official record detailing comprehensively the carrying out of the ambitious scheme which proved so successful. Broadly speaking, the scheme was to break through the enemy line in the coastal area and, if successful, to roll him back into the hills. At the right moment our cavalry were to dash through to the rear and endeavour to surround the entire Turkish army.

\* \* \* \*

The day before the September advance, the enemy Intelligence Service issued a disposition map, which was captured in the headquarters of the Yilderim Army Group at Nazareth. The information embodied in this map is quite in accordance with the enemy's air-service reports that "no essential changes had taken place in the distribution of the British forces." No change is shown. The move of the 60th Division into the XXIst Corps area, and the concentration of the cavalry on the coast, not to mention the alteration in the front of the 10th and 53rd Divisions, are passed quite unnoticed. The latter was apparently considered as being in reserve to the sector lately occupied by the Desert Mounted Corps. The 6th Poona Division (at that time in Mesopotamia) is shown as being within 10 miles of the front line, though, to be fair, its exact location is queried.

The position of General Headquarters is not shown, and that of the XXIst Corps Headquarters is placed eleven miles away from where it was actually to be found. The French troops up in the line are queried as Italians.

On September 18 the preliminary concentration was complete. The divisions detailed for the main attack, 60th, 7th, 75th, 3rd, 54th and the French contingent, had actually

taken up their positions, the troops previously holding the coastal sector having closed up on to their own fronts of attack to make room for them.

The cavalry were concealed in the orange and olive groves, two divisions immediately north and east of Jaffa, and one (the Australian Mounted Division) near Ludd; all were within easy reach of the positions of assembly which they were to occupy during the night 18th-19th.

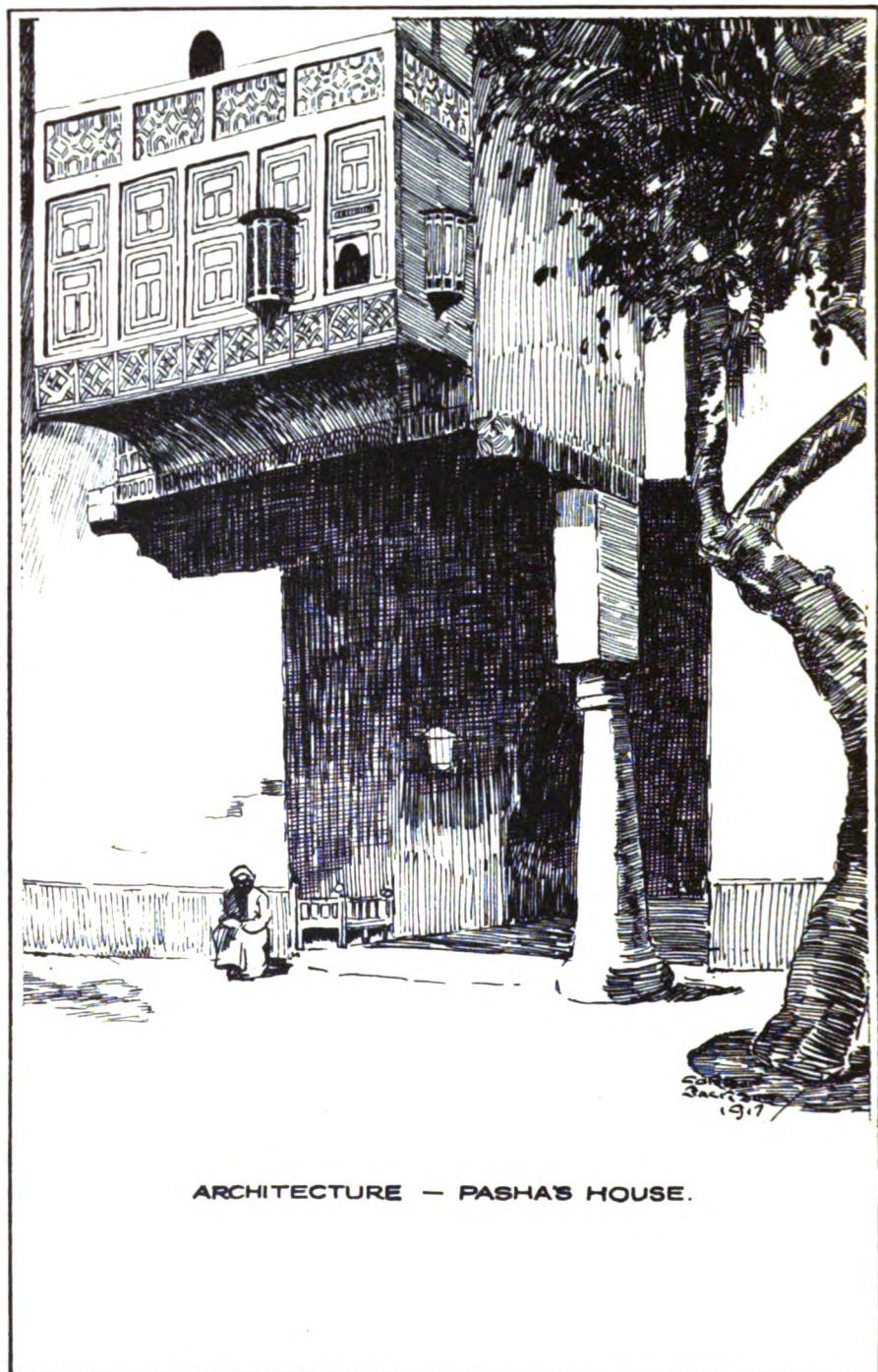
On the right the 10th and 53rd Divisions had closed in their outer flanks, west and east respectively, leaving their centre from Kefr Malik to Jiljulieh covering the main Jerusalem-Nablus road to be occupied by Watson's Force, a composite detachment formed from the XXth Corps cavalry regiments, two pioneer battalions, and the XXth Corps reinforcement camp. The 53rd Division were in position to launch their preliminary attack on El Mugheir as soon as darkness fell, and thus bring forward the right flank of the corps preparatory to further advance.

The way in which this concentration was carried out and concealed from the enemy was one of the most remarkable achievements of the whole operations. A hostile aeroplane reconnaissance on the 15th reported as follows: "Some regrouping of cavalry units apparently in progress behind the enemy's left flank; otherwise nothing unusual to report"; and this at a time when three cavalry divisions, five infantry divisions, and the majority of the heavy artillery of the force were concentrated between Ramleh and the front line of the coastal sector, there being no less than 301 guns in place of the normal number of seventy.

On the same date the enemy Intelligence Staff was advised in another aeroplane report that General Allenby's headquarters at Bir Salem was "infantry camp, two battalions."

Prisoners from the coastal plain and lower foothills of the Judæan range say that they had been told that the British would make a big attack about the 18th, but they had so often been given the same warning that no attention was paid to this one. That the Chief Command were uncertain as to which part





ARCHITECTURE — PASHA'S HOUSE.

of the front would be attacked is indicated by the fact that nowhere were troops grouped in reserve who could make an effective counter-attack. New units arriving on the front were dispersed, and the move, just previous to operations, of two German battalions from the west to the east of the Jordan was counter-balanced by the move of a strong Turkish regiment—the 191st—from the east to the west of the river.

The attack was launched at a quarter to five on the 19th, after only a quarter of an hour's bombardment, and broke clean through the Turkish defences on the coast with hardly a pause. On the right near Rafat the French contingent encountered determined opposition, and probably the hardest fighting of the day took place here and at Et Tireh, where the 75th Division only dislodged the reserves of the Turkish XXIIInd Corps (Rafat Bey) after a sharp struggle.

But to take the main attack as a whole, the hackneyed expression that “it went entirely according to plan” is quite inadequate; the pace at which the infantry broke down the opposition and the cavalry got through and away, exceeded the most sanguine hopes. By half-past seven the 5th Cavalry Division were crossing the Nahr Falik, and by midday they were across the Iskanderuneh; the 4th Cavalry Division, though at first delayed by the wire and trenches which they had to cross, were little behind them. By evening the cavalry divisions had watered and fed and were ready to continue their advance.

There is little more to be said about the infantry beyond that the 60th Division, after marching and fighting for eighteen miles, mostly over heavy sand, carried Tul Keram before dark. The 7th Division had reached the foothills about Et Taiyibeh; while the 3rd (Lahore) Division after taking its first objective changed direction eastwards, carried the strong works round Kalhilieh, Jiljulieh, and Hableh, and established itself on the foothills to the east. A pipe-line, 7000 yards in length, was laid in eight and a quarter hours by the Royal Engineers, while operations were in progress, from the mill race on the Nahr el Auja, and conveyed 4000 gallons per hour to Jiljulieh,

where storage was arranged the same day for 70,000 gallons. The 54th Division and the French had secured all their objectives and were sufficiently advanced to support the northern flank of the 10th Division, which had orders to start its advance that night.

The 75th Division, having disposed of all Turkish troops round Et Tireh, remained in that area and became Army Reserve.

On the front of the XXth Corps (53rd and 10th Divisions) there was no movement during the day ; the 53rd consolidated the line of El Mugheir which it had successfully captured the night before. At 3.35 in the afternoon telegraphic orders were sent for both divisions to start their main advance on the night 19th-20th.

On the 20th the 54th Division and the French contingent ceased to be engaged, having successfully occupied Bidieh and the high ground north of the Wadi Kadah and so secured the left flank of the 10th Division attack ; they were shortly afterwards withdrawn into reserve near the railway.

The 60th Division advanced up the Tul Keram-Nablus road, and though engaged all day with enemy rearguards, had no very severe fighting. By evening they had occupied Anebta village and had secured the railway tunnel at Bir Asur intact, and were pushing forward towards the important railway station of Messudieh, which had already been occupied by a squadron of the XXIst Corps cavalry and the 2nd H.A.C. Battery. The 5th Australian Light Horse Brigade, which was attached to the XXIst Corps for the time being, was operating north of Messudieh, and cut the railway near Ajje. The H.A.C. Battery subsequently pushed on towards Nablus.

The 7th Division pushed on all night through very difficult country, following mountain tracks over which no wheels could move ; their greatest hardship was shortage of water, many men having nothing but what they carried in their water-bottles for more than 24 hours. Though in touch with scattered parties of the enemy all the time, they had no serious opposition until reaching the commanding

village of Beit Lid, which overlooks the Nablus road, some three miles east of Anebta. Here the enemy had a strong rearguard posted, supported by numerous machine guns, and the division was held up for a time, the Seaforth Highlanders suffering particularly heavily. The opposition was, however, overcome, and the division was astride the road and railway north of Messudieh by 3 o'clock on the morning of the 21st, a magnificent exhibition of fighting and marching, and worthy of the best traditions of the 7th (late Meerut) Division, which has seen as much hard fighting in different theatres of war as any division in the Indian army.

The 3rd (Lahore) Division advanced steadily all day up the Azzon-Funduk track. This advance was slow in the face of strong enemy rearguards, but good progress was made and all opposition overcome. Both the 7th and the 3rd Divisions had to rely for their water supply during this day's advance on the two specially organised Camel Transport Corps water convoys, each of 2400 camels.

The 10th Division, who launched their attack early on the night of 19th-20th, experienced strong opposition both from infantry and artillery, most of the German troops being engaged in this sector. However, the enemy was pressed back as far as Kefr Harris before nightfall. It must be remembered that the 10th Division, also the 53rd Division, were operating in a most difficult country, which lends itself particularly to defence, also on this day they were attacking prepared, and often wired, positions.

On the right flank the Turks had concentrated comparatively large forces to oppose the 53rd Division, and in the course of the morning a counter-attack drove back our most advanced troops. The position was shortly afterwards recaptured by the 160th Infantry Brigade, the 1st Cape Corps Battalion and the 1/17th Infantry (Indian) particularly distinguishing themselves, and the advance of the whole division was continued.

While the infantry were breaking down the last organised resistance of the enemy, the action of the cavalry ensured the

success of the operations and the destruction or capture of the whole Turkish force east of the Jordan. Pressing on all night in parallel columns, the 4th Cavalry Division on Megiddo (Lejjun) and the 5th Cavalry Division on Abu Shusheh (a few miles to the north), the Plain of Esdraeldon was reached before dawn. Here the first opposition was met with ; as the advanced guard of the 4th Cavalry Division debouched from the defile at Lejjun a Turkish battalion with several machine guns was deploying in the plain below them. They were charged without hesitation by the leading regiment, the 2nd Lancers, and in a few minutes the division was able to continue the advance ; less prompt action might have caused fatal delay. The 4th Cavalry Division continued its advance through Al Afule to Beisan, which was successfully reached by evening ; the 19th Lancers securing the important bridge over the Jordan at Jisr Mejamic ten miles farther north. As showing the rapidity of our advance and the extent to which it surprised the enemy command, the following incident might be mentioned.

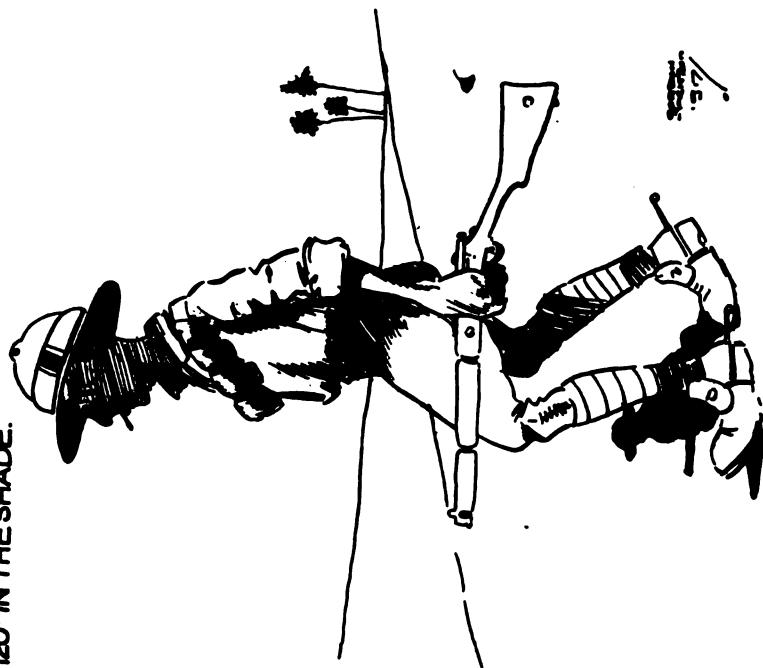
Shortly after our cavalry had taken El Afule, a German aeroplane, arriving from the north, landed on our aerodrome, the pilot being quite unconscious of the fact that the place was in the hands of the British.

Meanwhile the 5th Cavalry Division crossed the plain, and soon after dawn the 13th Brigade rode into Nazareth. Here some hard street-fighting occurred, but the Germans and Turks were driven out of the town and only held out in a few houses covering the Tiberias road. They were not dislodged as only one Brigade was available for the attack, the remainder being held ready in the plain to support the 4th Division if necessary. Yilderim Army Group Headquarters were captured in Nazareth with numbers of valuable documents, and the enemy commander, Marshal Liman von Sanders Pasha, himself only just made his escape in time ; some accounts even say he was actually in the town when the cavalry arrived, but, if so, he cannot have stayed there long. An eye-witness asserts that at the first alarm he ran, clad only in pyjamas and

THE ARGUMENT  
(NATIVE FASHION)



120° IN THE SHADE.





armed with an electric torch, from his sleeping quarters to near Our Lady's Well, shouting for the driver of his motor-car, in which he made off. Subsequently the Marshal returned, dressed and superintended the removal of some of his papers. In the evening, the whole of the 5th Division were at and around Afule.

The Australian Mounted Division, which moved forward in close support of the 4th Division, reached Lejjun about midday and at once detached the 3rd Australian Light Horse Brigade to occupy Jenin. This was accomplished early in the afternoon, the Brigade galloping over an entrenched position and speedily crushing all opposition. The only remaining Brigade, the 4th Australian Light Horse (the 5th Australian Light Horse being attached to the XXIst Corps), was fully employed collecting and conveying prisoners who had been picked up in ever increasing numbers all day.

In a word, a boldly conceived and ambitious cavalry scheme had been carried out to the letter, and all lines of retreat west of the Jordan denied to the enemy.

\* \* \* \*

For our part, whilst the 271st Brigade was at Ibn Ibraak from September 2-15, before the advance, training was going on and the work differed very little from normal routine except that drill and training were rather more intense and specialised. It was decided, for the forthcoming operations, that "A" Battery and our own Battery were to be attached to the 3rd (Lahore) Divisional Artillery, whilst our "C" Battery was to be retained by the 54th Div. Artillery. Major Wilson, Major Martin and Capt. Hough reconnoitred, on the 10th, battery positions and O.P.'s, and on the 11th we sent one gun and signallers up to "Bosche Wood." This was a post in our own front line, about four miles directly north of Mulebbis, and level with Bir Adas and Jiljulieh. It seemed strange that a gun should be taken so far forward, but, as it turned out, this was to be the battle position for the Battery when the time arrived. Machine guns were firing

into the selected gun line all night, and next day registration was carried out. A 77 mm. battery opened fire on the position, and spasmodically shelled the neighbourhood of the solitary gun all the afternoon. The gun returned to the bivouac area at Ibn Ibraak just before midnight on the 12th. During the remaining days Captain Stansfield was out selecting alternative wagon lines, best routes, etc., and ascertaining local water supplies ; spare stores and kit were dumped or returned to Ordnance, and preparations were speedily brought along to finality.

At dusk on the 16th we pulled on to Mulebbis into a concealed bivouac area, where no fires were allowed or movement in the open permitted. Great secrecy prevailed, no undue movement being allowed by day, and in fact horses were led out to water only when a friendly aeroplane was hovering about. All around us the groves and covered places were literally packed with troops representing all branches of the service, and all were observing the same strict orders for concealment. Lines of wheeled traffic of all descriptions were parked close to hedges and covered with camouflaging material. The tents in the old bivouac area were not struck until the night of the actual assault.

The Battery moved up into its battle position on the right of Bosche Wood on the 17th, the teams returning temporarily to Mulebbis, but advancing forward next evening to a covered wagon line near a wood (" Castle Hill ") a mile and a half in rear of the gun line. The Battery spent an uncomfortable night ; there was little cover, and a Turkish machine gunner seemed to know just where we were. Gunner Rushan was the first to be wounded.

The bombardment opened simultaneously along the front at 4.30 A.M. on the 19th, and, as mentioned in the official extracts reproduced, the 3rd Division moved forward at a great pace, capturing their objectives with little difficulty. Several of our detachments suffered slight wounds, whilst Bombardier S. F. Maylin was very seriously wounded. Also, it is to be deplored, in this last engagement, Gunner

A. A. Rogers was mortally wounded by a shell burst, whilst acting as one of the signallers with the forward officer, Lieut. Wright, and died next day of wounds. He was one of the most cheery men in the Battery, and his loss was keenly felt by all. He lies next to our old Adjutant, Capt. A. A. Brown, in the little British cemetery at Sarona on the outskirts of Jaffa.

After the engagement, we, with "A" Battery, received orders to rejoin the 54th Divisional Artillery in the neighbourhood of Ras el Ain, some five miles along the British front in a south-easterly direction. The 54th Divisional Artillery had been engaged in shelling in the region of Kefr Kasim in the foothills, and the objectives had been taken by the infantry. Our Brigade Commander contacted with the Brigadier-General commanding the 162nd Infantry Brigade (Bedfords, Northamptons, Londons), whom he had been ordered to support if necessary, at Sivri Wood, north of Kefr Kasim. In the meantime our Brigade had advanced across the plain to about 1000 yards short of Kefr Kasim, and one section of our Battery was ordered into action at a spot among the hills called Kh. Najjara. It is very pleasing to be able to quote a Brigade Diary note to the effect that we "very quickly came forward over very difficult country, especially in the Wadi Hatta."

This advance will ever be fresh in memory; the wadi did not boast of a flat bottom and was of approximate U or V section throughout. It was merely a rugged, craggy valley between hills plentifully besprinkled with huge boulders. Frequent halts were called to clear the way or to assist the teams by manhandling the guns out of huge thorny cracks, and the journey was continued at times with the vehicles dangerously tilting.

The 54th Division (less 161st Brigade), with 3rd (Lahore) Division on its left, was now moving on a north-south line and forcing the enemy in an easterly direction. All opposition having now given way, the Infantry Commander of the 162nd Brigade decided to halt for the night when his right flank

reached the neighbourhood of Senurieh. Our Brigade Commander accompanied him and remained the night at his headquarters, whilst our advanced section remained in action at Kh. Najjara with night lines laid on the road south-west of Kh. Kefr Thilth.

The following day, when the Infantry Commander moved his headquarters to Kh. Bur el Jan, our section in action at Kh. Najjara was instructed to make a further advance. Orders were received in the meantime that as all enemy resistance had been overcome and the enemy were retiring rapidly, the 54th Division would remain in the present line, and that all the Divisional Artillery would bivouac near Ras el Ain in the vicinity of water. We were in bivouac by four o'clock.

During the 19th, the War Diary records that the horses of our section which went into action at Kh. Najjara covered about 35 miles, the horses and mules of the remainder of the Battery covering about 25 miles; also that the conduct, shooting and general work of the Brigade previous to and during operations were beyond all praise, and that Major H. S. Martin, Major G. Paget, and Captain A. D. Hough respectively, carried out their duties as battery commanders during operations—which included a difficult and rapid move—with much skill and dash.

We rested during the 21st and 22nd in the neighbourhood of Ras el Ain, where there were fine crystal-water springs, and old ruins. It is one of the most abundant streams in Palestine and forms the River Auja. Ras el Ain is commonly identified with the ancient Antipatris founded by Herod. On an artificial hillock are the ruins of a stronghold of about 264 feet in width, flanked by a tower at each angle, and is a Mussulman structure of the twelfth or thirteenth century.

From reports read, whilst resting at Ras el Ain, "the conduct of the gun detachments, telephonists and forward observation officers (Lieuts. Fergusson and Jeffrey) under heavy fire was splendid."

We moved on to Jiljulieh on the 23rd, a strongly entrenched



THE MONKEY MAN.





village which had for so long formed an important point in the Turkish line, and stayed until the 26th, mainly interested during these days by the continuous stream of prisoners, on foot and in lorry, flowing southward. One could not appreciate that there were so many men on the other side, or that there could still be some left! They came along in batches of thousands, mostly dilapidated and dishevelled; Turks of Asia, Turks of Europe, complexions light and complexions swarthy.

The next part of our record is concerned with the step-by-step journey up to Beirut, following in the wake of the disorganised and thoroughly beaten Turkish armies.

At half-past four on that memorable morning, the crash of our artillery in the coastal sector heralded the coming Turkish débâcle, and the collapse of Ottoman misrule, corruption and intrigue in Palestine and Syria. The tide of success rolled on from the coast and Dead Sea to Damascus, Beirut and Aleppo. In its wake we followed, eventually pulling up short at Beirut.

The first day, September 27, we travelled fifteen miles from Jiljulieh to the village of Kakon, moving parallel with the coast on a good road as far as Tul Keram, with then about three miles soft pulling. The next march was a short one of eight miles to Kerkur, and thence, on the 29th, to Zimmarin, eleven miles of fairly good going, especially the last stages, which were over a good road surface, although steeply ascending in places towards the town. Zimmarin is a beautiful Jewish village, the colonists being for the most part Jews of Roumania who emigrated in 1882. Baron Rothschild gathered them together on this hill, to which he gave the name Zichron Jacob. This is one of the most flourishing colonies in Palestine, and is crossed by straight and wide roads, and the houses are constructed with as much regularity as economy. A noticeable feature are the large buildings used in making wine.

*En route* we had passed within a couple of miles of Cesarea, on the coast, a little port rich in history, from the

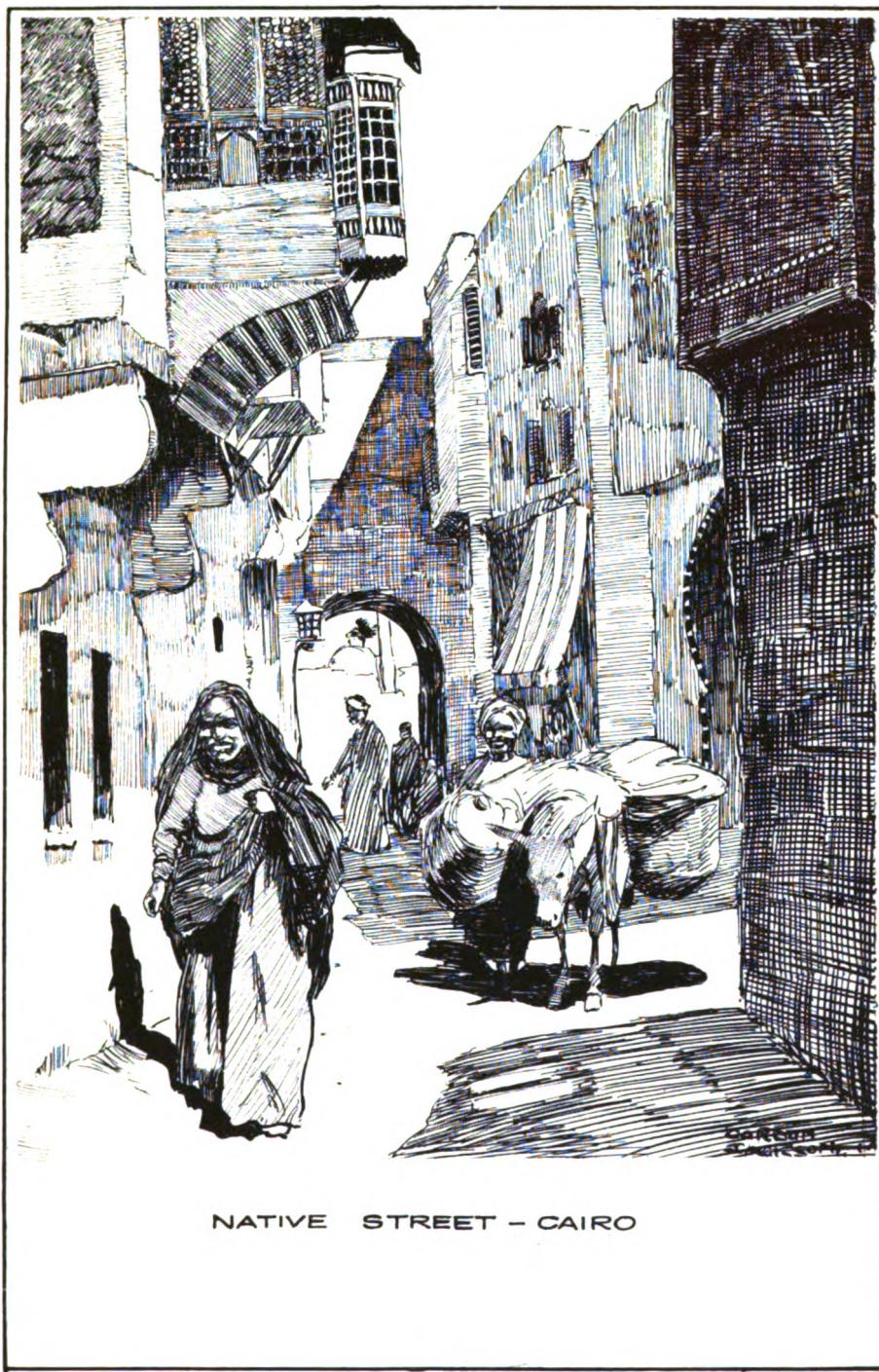
time in 25 B.C. when Herod the Great transformed its tiny bay into a seaport, right through the ages.

Horses and mules were standing the march splendidly, but a great number of the men were succumbing to sandfly fever.

We moved on to Athlit, on the coast, this section of the journey being not more than half a mile from the sea all the way, and the dozen miles of flat going was enjoyable. Athlit consists primarily of the ruins of a fortress built upon a rock which juts into the sea, and is entered by a pass or path, the entrance to which was defended by a gate flanked by two bastions, the ruins of which are still to be seen. It is the Castle of the Pilgrims, built in 1218 by the Templars for the protection of Christians. There is no doubt that in days long gone by this promontory had upon it a city and a fort.

Still following the coast, we completed the last ten miles of the first main stage of our journey by arriving at Haifa, overlooked by Mount Carmel, and situated on the southern side of the Bay of Acre. We first of all encamped for a night on the western beach of the town, moving about two miles the next day (Oct. 2nd) through the town to a bivouac area immediately north of Tel Abu Huwam.

Haifa, or Caiffa, or Hepha, called of old Calamon, is not mentioned in the Bible, nor does it make its appearance in history until a later date, and then only to play a very unimportant rôle. During the first Crusade, Godfrey de Bouillon gave Tancred the principality of Galilee, from Tiberias down to Haifa. Saladin took Haifa in 1187; but when, in 1191, Akka (Acre) fell into the hands of France, he ordered it to be dismantled and laid waste, so as to leave nothing but a heap of ruins to the Crusaders. It was rebuilt, but again destroyed and rebuilt. The troops of Bonaparte took Haifa in 1799, and a few days after brilliantly repulsed the attack of the English fleet. Later on, in 1837, Haifa was occupied by Ibrahim Pasha, and in 1840 the town, and the fort in particular, were very badly damaged by the bombardment of the united fleets of England, Austria and Turkey. After the withdrawal of



NATIVE STREET - CAIRO



the Egyptian army the town was left without a garrison until recent times.

The great attraction of Haifa is Mount Carmel. This beautiful chain of mountains, in great part of limestone, stretches from north to south for a distance of about fifteen miles, with a width that varies from three to five miles. In the middle it reaches a height of 1800 feet, and majestically overlooks the sea on the one side and the vast plain of Esdraeldon on the other. What made this mountain for ever renowned was the sojourn which the prophet Elijah made upon it and the wonders he wrought there. Carmel even received the name of the Mountain of St. Elias. It was on the top of Carmel that Elijah, after demonstrating the powerlessness of the false god Baal, built an altar, placed the victim upon it, and called upon the Lord. Immediately fire came down from heaven. The priests of Baal were taken down to the torrent of Cison and killed there (1 Kings xviii 1-40).

We stayed at Haifa about three weeks and rested. There was plenty of water for men and horses, and daily bathing parades, recreations, and visits to the town, varied by occasional training directed mainly to march discipline, constituted the life here. On the 12th a ceremonial parade was held, at which Lieut. Jeffrey ("C" Battery) was awarded the M.C. for bravery and devotion to duty at Kefr Kasim, Signaller H. C. Lungley ("C" Battery) was awarded the M.M. for bravery under fire at Kefr Kasim, and Signallers B. Fairman and F. Fox ("A" Battery) were awarded the M.M. for bravery under fire whilst repairing lines at the Bosche Wood position.

General ill-health and disease were now getting a grip on the troops, and the men were suffering a good deal from malaria, malignant and benign, sand-fly fever, and a form of influenza; the Brigade as a whole was nearly 100 under strength.

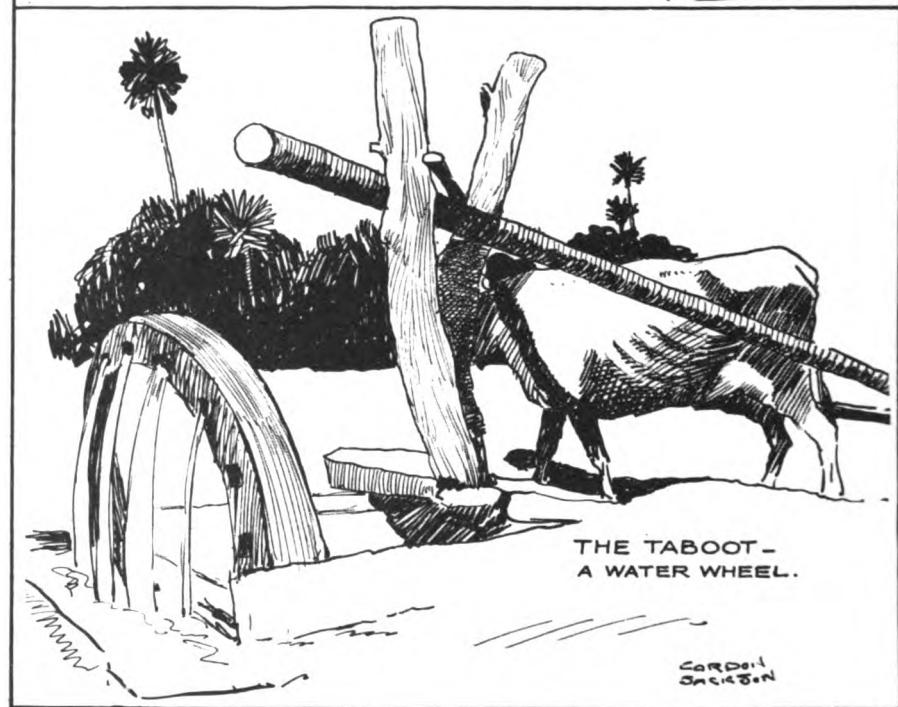
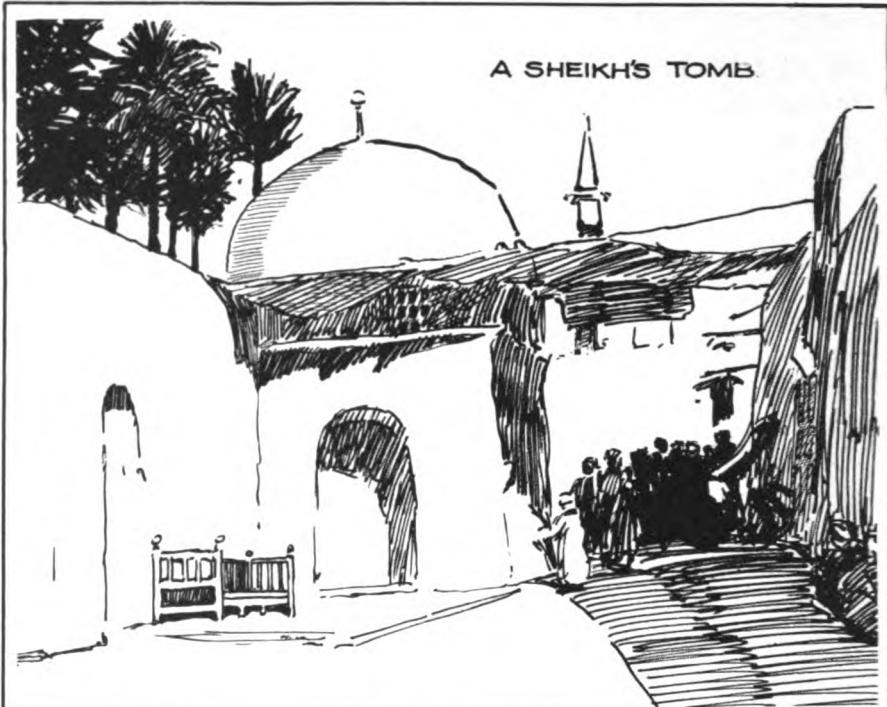
However, on the 23rd we continued our march northwards under orders of the Brigadier Commanding the 162nd

Infantry Brigade, reaching the historic city of Acre on the same day, 12 miles around the Bay of Acre. In this journey we passed along the shore of the Bay, and left on the right beautiful plantations of palms, orange-trees and other fruit trees.

The city of Acre (Akka) of old had two ports, the one within and the other without. The interior one was bounded by a pier defended by several towers, whose lower portions are still visible in the water. It is filled with sand, and is only a yard and a half deep. The outside port is used to-day as a roadstead for merchant ships. On the side of the land, the walls, much shorter to-day than they were in the Middle Ages, consist of a double rampart flanked by towers and bastions, all in a bad state. On the north is the citadel. Quite near is the military hospital, whose foundations date from the Crusades, and belonged, it is believed, to the Castle of the Knights of St. John. Next is the Seraglio and the Mosque of Djezzar Pasha, the principal monument of the city. It is built of pillars and other material taken from the ruins of Tyre, of Cesarea, and of Kaifa el Atica. On the right of the door is a beautiful fountain; another one, less handsome, is to be found in the interior court. The doorway of the mosque is ornamented with two superb, small, twisted columns. Other beautiful columns support the interior galleries. On the right of the building may be seen, under a well with two domes, the tomb of Djezzar Pasha, and that of the Mameluke Suleiman. The most remarkable khan is that of Djezzar Pasha, near the port, which is entered by passing under a handsome modern tower supporting a Turkish clock. The columns of granite supporting the porticoes come from buildings of Greco-Roman style.

It was near Acre, according to Josephus, that glass was first made. Pliny says that many centuries before his day a ship full of nitre came ashore in this place. In order to cook their food, the merchants stood the cooking pot on some pieces of nitre, which, melting with the sand under the action of the heat, made a transparent liquid. This was the origin





of glass. Early history associates the town with the Israelites, Assyrians and the Persians, and without a doubt it has taken a great part in history. In the time of the Ptolemies it received the name Ptolemais, and it is Biblically recorded (Acts xxi 7) that St. Paul, coming from Asia Minor, landed at Tyre and then at Ptolemais. After spending a day there with the followers of Christ, he made his way to Jerusalem.

After Acre we carried on another twenty-five miles to another Ras el Ain, just before Tyre. In so doing we abruptly left the flat plain of the coast and climbed the Ladder of Tyre at Ras el Nakura, where the road had been developed from a series of zig-zag steps cut out of the rock, which eventually wound round the headland as a strip-like shelf on the side of the mountain. One edge of the road descended precipitously into the Mediterranean, and from this dizzy edge the breakers could be seen among the rocks a thousand feet below. It was certainly not work for nervous drivers. A gradual descent brought us on to the flat again, and Tyre could be discerned in the distance jutting out into the sea. The road in places was only a matter of yards from the sea.

Tyre at one time became the first city of Phœnicia, and extended its dominion over the whole of Lebanon, and like the neighbouring Acre is associated with all the ancient history. If we believe the Tyrian priests of Melkart (Herodotus, ii, 44), Tyre, in Hebrew Zor, was built 2750 years B.C. It is looked upon as a strong place in the Book of Joshua, and the prophet Isaiah (xxiii 12) calls it the daughter of Sidon. Coming right through the ages, and undergoing many vicissitudes, it crops up in the time of the Crusades, and in A.D. 1124 Baldwin II took it by the aid of the Venetian fleet. After the fall of Acre, Tyre was destroyed by the Saracens, never to rise again.

We left Ras el Ain on October 24, passing through Tyre to a bivouac area at Nebi Kasim on the Nahr el Kasimir, a ten-mile trek, hugging the coast the next day to Ain el Burak, a further thirteen miles, the road becoming one with a comparatively good metalled surface. We arrived in a

thunderstorm, and there stayed the night on the banks of a river. In crossing the Nahr el Kasimir we marched out of Palestine proper, some eighteen months after crossing the southern frontier at Rafa. It is believed that the 54th Division was the only division to do this without its order of battle being changed.

Early the following day we arrived at Saida (Sidon), travelling the seven miles in speedy fashion.

Saida is bordered on the land side by vast and beautiful gardens of orange-trees, lemon-trees, palm-trees, banana-trees, fig-trees, apricot-trees, and farther on olive-trees, which are its principal source of wealth. Although associated with all the fascinating history of these parts, the city offers little that is interesting to the archaeologist. After entering it by the Acre gate, situated in the south-eastern corner, we meet on the left the ruins of a castle of the thirteenth century, which the Christians called St. Louis' Castle. It was at Saida, in 1840, that the allied fleets of Turkey, Austria and England, commanded by Commodore Napier, bombarded the fortress of the port occupied by the troops of Ibrahim Pasha.

From Saida we journeyed on in three stages to Beirut, viz. El Damur, thirteen miles; Shuweifat, nine miles; and Beirut (Tayune), six miles. From Tayune, an impressive march of all arms was made through the town, where, notwithstanding the Turkish police still in charge and many pro-Turkish civilians, a cordial reception was given us. We settled at Mar Rukos, south-east of the town, eventually moving on Nov. 15 to the Maronite village of Hadeth, a station on the narrow-gauge Damascus railway some four miles out of Beirut.

Seen from the Bay of St. George, Beirut presents a delightful spectacle. The town resembles, according to an expression of the Arabs, a beautiful sultaness reclining on a cushion of verdure and contemplating the billows in dreamy dalliance. In truth, round about the roadstead the houses rise up like an amphitheatre on the slopes of smiling hillocks,

decked with flowers and rich vegetation. Behind these hills rise others of greater height, covered with white villages and pretty villas surrounded by clusters of trees. Far away appears the gigantic summit of Libanus, covered with dazzling snow the greater part of the year. The panorama displayed at Beirut is worthy of comparison with Naples or Constantinople.

St. George, that noble soldier who gloriously suffered martyrdom near Nicomedia, April 23, 303, became at an early date one of the patron saints of Beirut, and the beautiful bay was named after him. But soon also the people sought to supplement his short biography by adding to the history of this illustrious martyr legendary touches borrowed from Pagan heroes. If in other places there have been attributed to him deeds of prowess like those of the conqueror of the Hydra of Lerna, at Beirut they have accredited him with a legend similar to that of Perseus and Andromeda of Joppa, and have localised the scene in the bay that bears his name.

There is no mention of this town in the Bible, nor do we find the slightest reference to it in the annals of Alexander the Great. In 140 B.C. Didotus Tryphon pillaged Berytos, and later it was captured by Marcus Agrippa, who made it a military colony. Christianity had spread to Beirut at an early date, and among the many illustrious men who first saw the light at Beirut is St. Pamphilus, who succeeded Origen as director of the school of Alexandria, and collected afterwards a famous library at Cesarea. Here in 309 he won the martyr's crown. In 551 the town was destroyed by an earthquake. Baldwin I laid siege to Beirut in 1110, and in the sixteenth century the town was subject to the Emirs of the Druses.

In 1789 Abdallah Pasha freed the town finally from the power of the Druses. Under the rule of Mahomet Ali, Viceroy of Egypt, its commerce revived. On October 10, 1840, however, the allied fleets, including that of England, bombarded the port and dislodged the Egyptian garrison. In 1860 a large number of Maronites, fleeing from the

massacres of Lebanon, made their home on the shores of the bay at Beirut. Trade developed in proportion to the increase in the population, and the ancient walls surrounding the town were of necessity demolished in order to give place to new buildings. At the present time Beirut gives one the impression that it is a town of a semi-European type.

Before moving to Hadeth, the rains and the lowered vitality and the reaction of the last weeks culminated in increased sickness, and the history of November 1918 was one of constant anxiety owing to influenza, pneumonia, malaria, and dysentery among all ranks. Large numbers overcrowded the already congested hospitals, R.A.M.C. centres and improvised stations, and victims were daily claimed. More deaths and casualties were caused by the sickness then prevalent than by other causes during the whole campaign. "C" Battery lost all its officers and 70 per cent. of other ranks, and the remainder were divided up and attached to "A" Battery and ourselves.

Fortunately we were able to move into billets at Hadeth on November 15, and with a dozen infantrymen attached to help (no reinforcements being allowed) we were able to carry on. Meanwhile several of the men from local hospitals returned to strength, and an easier time arrived. The animals had stuck it well, and attention to nearly a full complement over the past weeks had severely put to test the resources and endurance of the depleted officers and men—depleted in numbers and depleted in stamina. One man "taking" six mules at a time to water was no uncommon sight.

Sergt. E. Miller of "A" Battery (an old "B" Battery man of pre-war days) was one of the many who succumbed to sickness ; he died of pneumonia this month.

Definite news of the long-rumoured Armistice reached us while we were still at Mar Rukos. Long pent-up feelings were freely given rein. It was real—actuality ! The war was truly over, finished. At long last, the drawn-out years of travel and roughing it, of killing and maiming, and of abnormalities were closed. Home ! and all it meant—





"B" BATTERY, 271ST BRIGADE, R.F.A., FOOTBALL TEAM

HORIDE SLOWLEY BIRD CAMP WELLS HARRIS LT. WRIGHT  
PHILLIPS HUMPHRIS WEBB YORK TRANGMAR  
LEVETT (CAPT.) MILLER ADEY LOVEDAY VERNALL

(CAIRO, 1918-1919)



271ST BRIGADE, R.F.A., CROSS-COUNTRY TEAM  
(CAIRO, 1919)



now something to look forward to with assurance. Discipline? Well, it had been necessary—every sane-minded man recognised that; but soon it was to be just as much as we cared to inflict upon ourselves; at all events we would rise out of the sphere of automata, regimental numbers and enforced ignorance. No, on a benevolent reflection, it had not been so bad as that in our homely little brigade. But the glorious anticipation brought out magnified hardships and fancied wrongs, which were after all nothing more than necessary elements in the system we were still proud to support. What an alluring prospect! We would soon assume a place in civilian life, exercise our own thoughts (for what they are worth), become an entity, and, well—slam the door if we d— well cared! Better by far to be the head of a mouse than the tail of a lion. That was the spirit of Armistice. Visions of a care-free future conjured up. Sighs of relief. It was immense.

A veritable maze of different thoughts arose, the most prominent being the feeling of infinite relief at the finality of the whole business. In dim retrospect, the early days of Romford and France seemed associated with an era as far removed as the ancient history of Beirut. Happiness approached hysteria—the same emotions prompted the same actions as in the home towns on Armistice night. Bonfires on the slopes of Lebanon; music and merriment, cat-calls and cacophony; awed natives standing agape at the rapidly-disintegrated stolidity of the Britisher. The bottles of Greek-made “cognac” bought surreptitiously from dirty Arabs were unnecessary for intoxication. Laws and rules were transgressed. All ranks were infected. Our Colonel, hastily collecting a group of any soldiers from anywhere, led the singing of the National Anthem, which tailed off hours later into detached crowds singing detached jingles. The horses wondered; the Arabs went *magnoon* (mad). With the Very lights and flares of infantry units were mingled the glare and dull thuds of our “C” Battery of howitzers firing sandbag wads with full charges in a royal salute. Ships’ hooters

sounding from the Bay of St. George, and the hazy peaks of Lebanon indulgently smiling down. And without doubt this Syrian scene was being enacted over half the globe. Pandemonium was allowed to reign. The boiler did not burst, but the safety-valve springs were severely over-worked !

The conviviality was continued until late, and many sore throats and sore heads were on parade on the 12th. But a new spirit animated the troops, and yesterday had supplied a tonic for poor condition and general enervation not to be found in any M.O.'s chest. Stables and fatigues were less tiresome, and right willingly did we again worship at the altar of halters.

During the Armistice week our officers were busily prospecting for a better site for the camp, and there could be no two opinions as to the necessity for this. At the outset the Mar Rukos position was apparently ideal. A gentle slope of firm, hard earth gradually flattened out to a good standing for the horselines and gun park, which were side by side a few yards from the road. On the slope a few tents and bivouacs were pitched, and for a time the short-handed Battery managed moderately well. Higher up on the slope, an isolation bivouac area was formed to cope with the sick cases which it was found impossible to evacuate to hospital ; in point of numbers this latter camp was stronger than the unit itself, comprising men lying in their bivouacs all day, living on Bovril, reading-matter, thermometers and milk, and attended by an orderly under the instructions of our own M.O. Daily, convalescents were returned to duty and bad cases sent to hospital, whilst always there were fresh arrivals from the lines. As a matter of fact, practically all the unit could genuinely have gone into isolation, for the lowered state of health and high temperatures were general.

While in this state of flux, heavy rains came down, and the days were some of the most miserable and depressing of the campaign. The heartening effect of Armistice was wearing off. It was not unlike Tannay in France for mud, plus the results of depleted ranks, and sickness of the little band

remaining. Improvised harness racks in the horses' lines (which were always collapsing) were needed to prop up the saddlery and gear away from the ankle-deep pools and mud. The hard ground rapidly softened into a sloppy quagmire, and traces, bits, and small gear were continually being lost or fished out. Ration fatigues on soaking saddles and muddy peevish animals were followed on return by the drivers being detailed for night picquet. They had to "posh up," have tea and parade inside half an hour, after rubbing down and feeding their mounts. And even then they were on rations the next day, with the possibility of another night duty to follow, so short were we!

The move to a hard-standing on the by-turning leading down to Hadeth Station, and dry billets for the men, was never more welcome. It marked a turning point; sickness commenced to decline, our numbers increased, and the sun came out.

In this position outside Beirut the starvation which must have existed among many of the natives was pitifully apparent. Emaciated specimens of humanity, mere animated frames, came down from the hills and begged for food. Sometimes two or three would drag weary footsteps to the region of the cookhouse, and squat down, looking on with mutely imploring eyes. One young Armenian girl, who was beautiful even in her distress, with large blue eyes set in a pallid oval face characteristic of southern Europe, and a mass of jet black hair spread over bare shoulders, created a picture which will haunt many for years to come. Her clothes were negligible, and as she stood with hand extended on a thin bony arm, it was plain that she was only supporting herself by the broken wall around the cookhouse area. Poor girl! she hungrily devoured the rough-and-ready plain army food unthinkingly showered upon her. If our spontaneous kindness had not overrun our discretion, she might have been alive now, but the careful dietary necessary was lacking, and her body was found in a tumbledown shack some days later.

In the basement of some ruins near by two old women

and children were existing in a shocking state, and were discovered by Driver Davis when on the verge of starvation. His periodical visits with food pulled the family round.

A tiny tot of a girl about two and a half years toddled into the storeshed one day, whence, goodness knows! She was certainly far from nourished, and, when the few rags were removed, far from clean. Here was a problem. No one came along to claim the mite, and although we could very well attend to the commissariat (the number of tins of "Ideal" of which the cookhouse was denuded was prodigious!) yet the departments connected with ablution and clothing were somewhat removed from mere man's ken. However, the Q.M.S., Sergeant Bryant, and one or two other family men collectively nominated themselves as a temporary mother, and the little frocks and hats which that child appeared in were strange and curious. We have it on authority (from the "temporary mother") that the under-garments would be passed as correct, and there is no doubt also that rapid physical progress was daily visible. Due to the efforts of Major Martin and the officers in general, our protégée was duly housed and her immediate future provided for in a Mission in the town prior to leaving.

With our military authorities, the American Relief Mission and local French administration were all hard at work relieving distress, and during our occupation of Hadeth journeys were made into outlying villages with loads of grain.

We stayed at Hadeth about a month, during which time preparations were being made for the shipment of the 54th Division back into Egypt. On December 12, 1918, we embarked at the port of Beirut on the s.s. *Huntsgreen* for Kantara, and on the 14th arrived back in Cairo. The Divisional camp was situated at Helmieh near Heliopolis, and this was the last position occupied as a unit.

We had completed out part in the world war, and in its most romantic sphere. Schooled for fifteen months in England, apprenticed for three in France, we finally emerged



MAJOR W. J. HARRIS, T.D.  
CAPTAIN IN "B" BATTERY ON EMBARKATION, 1915

COMMANDED THE RECONSTITUTED BATTERY  
(338TH (ESSEX) FIELD BATTERY, R.A.)  
1919-1926



as New Crusaders, emulating the Knights gallant of yore. For three years did we journey and battle in the East, passing through Philistia, into Judæa and Samaria, to Gilead and Galilee, and thence to Syria. What names to conjure with! What a privilege to take a small part in the modern reconquest of such a region!

To the higher command, what unique circumstances and extraordinary problems were presented. As the Egyptian Expeditionary Force advanced and more and more territory was released from Turkish rule, the Commander-in-Chief gradually became responsible for the administration of a large area and a considerable population. The former had suffered from centuries of neglect and the passage of contesting armies, while the latter was impoverished and ill-nourished as the result of exhaustive Turkish requisitions and the blockade to which the country, while under Turkish rule, had been subjected by the Allies. The peculiar religious status of Jerusalem and the presence of numerous privileged ecclesiastical corporations also gave rise to complicated questions of a nature seldom presented to the military administration of occupied enemy territory. This administration of what was technically "occupied enemy territory" was entrusted locally to Military Governors, who were able greatly to improve the condition of the country and to alleviate the sufferings of a population which had welcomed General Allenby as a deliverer from the detested Turk. Postal facilities for civilians had been restored, and the introduction of the stable Egyptian currency enabled commerce to revive in spite of the necessary priority of military claims upon the transport available. The policing of the country was effectively undertaken, transport facilities were provided for civilian travellers, education was regulated, and schools were reopened.

The Military Governor of Jerusalem was able greatly to abate the acerbity of ecclesiastical differences in the Holy City, and it was largely due to his personal efforts and influence that the Ceremony of the Holy Fire on the Orthodox Easter (May 5, 1918) passed off without disorder, in spite of a long

tradition of riot and violence during the Turkish period. In the new spirit of conciliation, fostered by the Military Administration, the Orthodox clergy voluntarily removed an unsightly party-wall from the nave of the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem, and the careful handling of religious questions has permitted the formation of an atmosphere contributing to the existence of a spirit of sweet reasonableness which would have struck a Turkish Mutessarif of Jerusalem as being most unusual. The deference paid on every side to Moslem susceptibilities, the guard of Indian Moslems round the Dome of the Rock and in front of the Mosque el Aska, no less than the military assistance given by the Commander-in-chief to make the Moslem pilgrimage to Nebi Musa possible, went far to convince the Mohammedan population of the country that the interests of their religion were better safeguarded by the Allies of the Sherif of Mecca than by the Turks.

The arrival of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force was fortunately so timed as to prevent the wholesale deportation of Hebrew colonists and residents which had actually been ordered by the Turks, and these careful agriculturists were able to restore to a great extent the properties in the Kaza of Jaffa which they had been able to preserve in part from the spoliation of the enemy. Not only did the colonists benefit from the market afforded by the presence of the army, but were able to co-operate in the efforts made on behalf of the whole Hebrew community by the energetic Dr. Chaim Weiszmann and the Zionist Commission, which culminated in the ceremonial foundation of the University of Jerusalem as a symbol alike of their confidence in the future and of their recognition of the necessity of imparting higher education in their own language.

It is with a proud feeling that we are able to base our narrative mainly on this phase and subsidiary theatre of the Great War, and to provide a Record for our successors linked up with such accomplishments.

Regretfully, the Battery broke up abroad, instead of returning as a unit to its native heath. Onwards from our

arrival at Helmieh, the dwindling Battery settled down to necessary work only, and very little drill after the ceremonial march past General Sir E. Allenby at Opera Square, Cairo, on December 20. A good Christmas spread and concert were provided, and members left one by one and in batches for the embarkation camp at Kantara.

In the early months of 1919, native riots, fostered by the young advanced Egyptian students, started, and spread over the country. Various guards, especially on bridges and railways, picquets and patrols were supplied by the army, and the Battery was called upon for mounted patrols armed with pick-helves. It is sad that, even after Armistice, our casualties had not ceased; Driver Lovett, a grizzled old veteran from the farmsteads of Suffolk, unfortunately succumbed to injuries received in a fracas with natives.

During this time, and especially after the rising had temporarily subsided, schools were in full swing to fit the men for their return to civilian life, and various commercial subjects, taught by army schoolmasters, could be learnt.

The Battery was reduced to "cadre" or skeleton strength, most of the horses passed on to the Remount Department, and guns returned to local Ordnance. As the troops, in dribs and drabs, filtered through to the homeland, *via* Kantara and Port Said (most overland from Taranto to Le Havre), temporary promotions were made to keep the unit up to nominal cadre, Bombardiers and Drivers becoming Sergeants, B.Q.M.S., etc. In this process of attrition the Battery became one in name only, and had ceased to function. A mere handful constituted our old B/271; the once blazing fire, kindled years ago at Romford, had died down, and Armistice had ruthlessly kicked the dulling embers to the four winds. An unromantic finish.

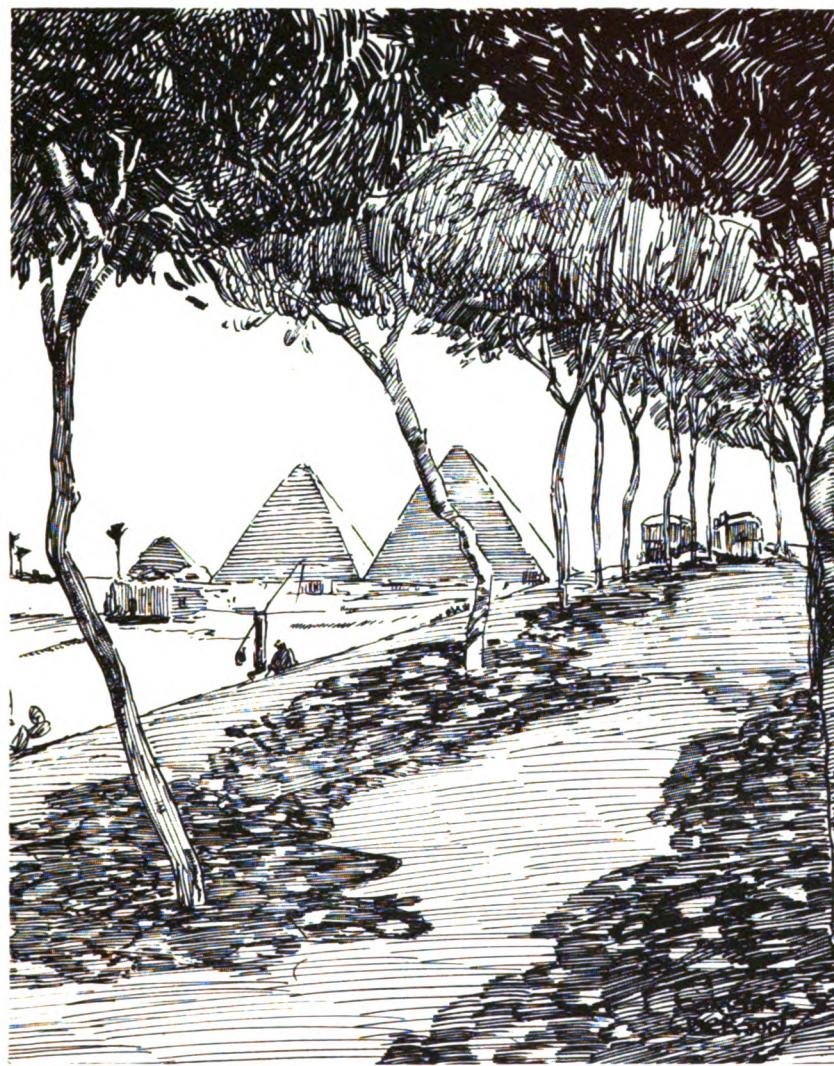
The Territorial spirit lives in the new Battery built up on our ashes. Perhaps we were fortunate in more than one direction. We were, at all events, able to preserve our identity throughout everything; the solid nucleus of "locals" and pre-war friends had remained intact; notwithstanding

comings and goings, only the fringe was touched, the core of stalwarts remained integral and were the backbone of the Battery all through. We were a family party who lived together in England, who had associated in old drill-hall days, who had daily journeyed in the same trains together or had listened for the same dinner hooter before war was thought of. No wonder the harmonious spirit prevailed among N.C.O.'s and men on the one hand, and officers and O.R.'s on the other. It is an advantage inherent to the Territorial system. Most new comers were at least East Anglian men, and the odd "aliens" proved, without exception, chums in the fullest sense of the word. It is hard to stifle the choking feeling when it comes home with a shock that we are all now separated. Good times together, bad patches . . .

The individual result? Many have, unfortunately, been cast up high and dry workless by the economic storm, but War's aftermath finds many back in the old groove, plodding away to make good the wasted years.

Wasted? Well, it's moot. After all, it was enlightenment, experience, education. A man who has scraped French mud from his boots, thrown cigarette ends in the Gulf of Suez, and bathed in the Jordan, cannot but have had his mind broadened. He has been taught many things in a school now closed, and if only he has discovered that this good old world is for the use of others beside himself, that there is no great gap between high and low, and has acquired a fraternal understanding, can we use the word "wasted"?

It is hoped that there have been many chords struck which have found an immediate echo in the heart of more than one quondam Battery warrior. Even if only there has been started a train of "Do you remember?" talk, the work will not have been wholly unfruitful. But, primarily, the foregoing chapters are a *record* pure and simple; where the Battery was on a particular date, what it did, and—whether it rained. Here and there a clothing of discursiveness, both



THE PYRAMIDS.



facetious and sublime, has been draped around the bare outline, and the whole capped by personal impression.

There has been pleasure in compiling the pages ; in mind the incidents have been lived again ; the old spots revisited ; better still, many old forgotten faces have risen out of the past. Would that it were possible to assemble all together once more, but a period of six years is too thoroughly a disperser. If the old comrades cannot meet together at the Mount of Reminiscence, then we will take the mountain to them individually, like Mahomet, in the shape of this little volume. An unsatisfying substitute in all verity !

And, with it, the compilers—through the present-day turmoil and heartbreaking disappointments—extend a hearty handshake to all, and sincere wishes for good luck and happiness. Also, let us not await the annual two minutes, but bestow a tender thought on those who have rested by the way.



## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX I

#### ITINERARY OF THE BATTERY

Places at which the Battery stayed.	Arrived.	Departed.	Mileage from Romford.
ROMFORD . . . .	Aug. 4, 1914	Aug. 7, 1914	
Felixstowe (Left Section) . .	Aug. 8, 1914	Oct. 12, 1914	72
Collier Row			
Chelmsford			
Colchester (Right Section)	Aug. 10, 1914	Oct. 23, 1914	
Colchester (Lexden)			
Ipswich (Left Section) . . .	Oct. 12, 1914	Oct. 13, 1914	88
Colchester (Lexden Park) . .	Oct. 13, 1914	Oct. 23, 1914	105
(Left Section)			
Colchester (Oliver's Farm and Shrub End) . . .	Oct. 23, 1914	April 14, 1915	110
Salisbury Plain . . . .	April 15, 1915	April 20, 1915	246
Colchester . . . .	April 20, 1915	May 1, 1915	382
Colchester (Stanway) . . .	May 1, 1915	May 3, 1915	
Hemel Hempstead . . . .	May 3, 1915	Aug. 24, 1915	444
Thetford . . . .	Aug. 25, 1915	Nov. 15, 1915	509
Southampton . . . .	Nov. 16, 1915	Nov. 17, 1915	682
LE HAVRE . . . .	Nov. 18, 1915	Nov. 18, 1915	787
Lynde ( <i>via</i> St. Omer) . . .	Nov. 19, 1915	Nov. 22, 1915	1007
Morbecque ( <i>via</i> Sercus) . .	Nov. 22, 1915	Nov. 23, 1915	1112
Tannay (Thiennes) . . . .	Nov. 23, 1915	Dec. 12, 1915	1117
Ames . . . . .	Dec. 12, 1915	Dec. 27, 1915	1129
Vermelles . . . . .	Dec. 27, 1915	Dec. 28, 1915	1150
Ames . . . . .	Dec. 29, 1915	Jan. 1, 1916	1171

## ROMFORD TO BEIRUT

Places at which the Battery stayed;	Arrived.	Departed.	Mileage from Romford.
Therouanne . . . .	Jan. 1, 1916	Jan. 27, 1916	1182
MARSEILLES . . . .	Jan. 29, 1916	Feb. 8, 1916	1872
ALEXANDRIA . . . .	Feb. 14, 1916	Feb. 14, 1916	3382
CAIRO (Mena) . . . .	Feb. 15, 1916	April 4, 1916	3517
Ayún Musa (Moses' Wells) . . . .	April 5, 1916	May 27, 1916	3672
El Shatt . . . .	May 27, 1916	Nov. 13, 1916	3687
Gebel Mur . . . .	Nov. 13, 1916	Jan. 8, 1917	3689
El Shatt . . . .	Jan. 8, 1917	Jan. 9, 1917	3691
Moascar (Ismailia) . . . .	Jan. 9, 1917	Jan. 31, 1917	3751
El Ferdan . . . .	Jan. 31, 1917	Feb. 1, 1917	3766
KANTARA . . . .	Feb. 1, 1917	Feb. 1, 1917	3778
Gilban . . . .	Feb. 2, 1917	Feb. 3, 1917	3789
Pelusium . . . .	Feb. 3, 1917	Feb. 4, 1917	3799
Romani . . . .	Feb. 4, 1917	Feb. 10, 1917	3806
Rabat . . . .	Feb. 10, 1917	Feb. 11, 1917	3815
Khirba . . . .	Feb. 11, 1917	Feb. 12, 1917	3822
Dir el Abd . . . .	Feb. 12, 1917	Feb. 13, 1917	3828
Salmana . . . .	Feb. 13, 1917	Feb. 14, 1917	3834
Telul . . . .	Feb. 14, 1917	Feb. 15, 1917	3841
Mazar . . . .	Feb. 15, 1917	Feb. 22, 1917	3851
Maadan . . . .	Feb. 22, 1917	Feb. 23, 1917	3859
Bardawil . . . .	Feb. 23, 1917	Feb. 24, 1917	3868
EL ARISH . . . .	Feb. 24, 1917	Mar. 20, 1917	3878
El Burge . . . .	Mar. 20, 1917	Mar. 21, 1917	3892
Sheikh Zoweid . . . .	Mar. 21, 1917	Mar. 23, 1917	3902
Rafa . . . .	Mar. 24, 1917	Mar. 25, 1917	3912
Bene Sala . . . .	Mar. 25, 1917	Mar. 25, 1917	3919
Deir el Belah . . . .	Mar. 25, 1917	Mar. 26, 1917	3924
GAZA, in front.			
Mansura			
El Burjaliye			
Sheikh Abbas			
Sharta			
Wadi Ghuzze			
Kurd Hill			
etc., etc.			
	Mar. 26, 1917	Aug. 7, 1917	3964

Places at which the Battery stayed.	Arrived.	Departed.	Mileage from Romford.
<b>Sheikh Shabassi (rest camp)</b>	<b>Aug. 7, 1917</b>	<b>Aug. 21, 1917</b>	<b>3972</b>
<b>GAZA, in front.</b>			
Kurd Hill			
El Sire			
Sheikh Ajlin			
etc., etc.			
<b>GAZA, beyond.</b>			
Sheikh Redwan	Nov. 7, 1917	Nov. 14, 1917	3982
Deir Sineid	Nov. 14, 1917	Nov. 15, 1917	3988
Mejdel	Nov. 15, 1917	Nov. 16, 1917	3996
Esdud (Ashdod)	Nov. 16, 1917	Nov. 17, 1917	4004
Yebna	Nov. 17, 1917	Nov. 18, 1917	4013
Ayûn Kara (Richon le Zion)	Nov. 18, 1917	Nov. 19, 1917	4021
<b>LUDD (Lydda) and neighbour-</b>			
hood	Nov. 19, 1917	Dec. 4, 1918	4028
Kefrana and Yehudiyeh	Dec. 4, 1917	Dec. 17, 1917	4033
Ibn Ibraak	Dec. 17, 1917	Dec. 20, 1917	4037
Mulebbis (outskirts)	Dec. 20, 1917	Dec. 22, 1917	4041
<b>MULEBBIS (Petah Tikwah) near</b>			
Jaffa	Dec. 22, 1917	Mar. 11, 1918	4043
Long Wood (Fcjja)	Mar. 11, 1918	Mar. 12, 1918	4048
Mulebbis.	Mar. 12, 1918	June 29, 1918	4052
Sakia	June 30, 1918	July 1, 1918	4057
Surafend	July 1, 1918	July 16, 1918	4062
Ibn Ibraak	July 16, 1918	July 22, 1918	4068
Surafend	July 22, 1918	July 23, 1918	4074
Latron	July 23, 1918	July 24, 1918	4086
Enab	July 24, 1918	July 25, 1918	4096
<b>JERUSALEM</b>			
Talaat ed Dumm	July 25, 1918	July 25, 1918	4106
JERICHO	July 26, 1918	July 28, 1918	4126
Goraniyeh (on Jordan)	July 28, 1918	Aug. 27, 1918	4131
JERICHO	Aug. 27, 1918	Aug. 28, 1918	4136
Talaat el Dumm	Aug. 28, 1918	Aug. 29, 1918	4146
<b>JERUSALEM</b>			
Enab	Aug. 29, 1918	Aug. 30, 1918	4156
	Aug. 30, 1918	Aug. 31, 1918	4166

## ROMFORD TO BEIRUT

Places at which the Battery stayed.	Arrived.	Departed.	Mileage from Romford.
Latron . . . . .	Sept. 1, 1918	Sept. 1, 1918	4176
Surafend . . . . .	Sept. 2, 1918	Sept. 2, 1918	4188
Ibn Ibraak . . . . .	Sept. 2, 1918	Sept. 15, 1918	4194
Mulebbis. . . . .	Sept. 16, 1918	Sept. 17, 1918	4200
Bosche Wood (near Jaffa)	Sept. 17, 1918	Sept. 19, 1918	4204
Ras el Ain (Antipatris)	Sept. 20, 1918	Sept. 20, 1918	4209
Kefr Kasim (Wadi Hatta)	Sept. 20, 1918	Sept. 21, 1918	4234
Ras el Ain . . . . .	Sept. 21, 1918	Sept. 22, 1918	4239
Jiljulieh . . . . .	Sept. 23, 1918	Sept. 27, 1918	4242
Kakon . . . . .	Sept. 27, 1918	Sept. 28, 1918	4257
Kerkur . . . . .	Sept. 28, 1918	Sept. 29, 1918	4265
Zimmarin (Zichron Jacob)	Sept. 29, 1918	Sept. 30, 1918	4276
Athlit . . . . .	Sept. 30, 1918	Oct. 1, 1918	4288
HAIFA (beach under Mt. Carmel)	Oct. 1, 1918	Oct. 2, 1918	4298
HAIFA (Tell Abu Huwam).	Oct. 2, 1918	Oct. 22, 1918	4300
ACRE . . . . .	Oct. 23, 1918	Oct. 24, 1918	4312
TYRE (Ras el Ain)	Oct. 24, 1918	Oct. 25, 1918	4337
Neibi Kasim . . . . .	Oct. 25, 1918	Oct. 26, 1918	4347
Ain el Burak . . . . .	Oct. 26, 1918	Oct. 27, 1918	4360
SIDON (Saida) . . . . .	Oct. 27, 1918	Oct. 28, 1918	4367
Ed Damur . . . . .	Oct. 28, 1918	Oct. 29, 1918	4380
Shuweifat . . . . .	Oct. 29, 1918	Oct. 30, 1918	4389
BEIRUT (Tayune)	Oct. 30, 1918	Oct. 31, 1918	4395
BEIRUT (Mar Rukos).	Oct. 31, 1918	Nov. 15, 1918	4396
BEIRUT (Hadeth)	Nov. 15, 1918	Dec. 12, 1918	4399
Kantara . . . . .	Dec. 13, 1918	Dec. 14, 1918	4649
CAIRO (Helmieh)	Dec. 14, 1918		4759

From about the end of December 1918, gradual demobilisation started, lasting till June 1919, when all the Battery had dispersed to England, individually, about a further 1890 miles home.

## APPENDIX II

### ROLL OF OFFICERS, NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS AND MEN WHO SERVED IN "B" BATTERY, 271ST BRIGADE, R.F.A., BETWEEN THE YEARS 1914 AND 1919.

THIS Roll has been compiled from records contained in His Majesty's Record Office, Woolwich, and thanks are due to the Officer in Charge and his staff for granting facilities and ready assistance.

Although every care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of the Roll, it is possible that inaccuracies have crept in, especially in the recording of particulars of the service of those who joined the Battery just after the outbreak of war, before the records were taken over by the Records Office. Should there be such, we apologise in advance.

It is probable also that the dates shown may, in some instances, not agree with an individual's personal experience. This discrepancy will in the majority of cases be accounted for by the fact that the Roll shows the effective date a man joined or was transferred, which date did not always agree with the actual date.

Furthermore, it is emphasised that this Roll is not intended to be a complete record (as regards dates) of any individual's war service. Service prior or subsequent to service in "B" Battery is therefore not shown, but transfers from or to other units are indicated in the last column thus: e.g. "C 271/54 D.A.C." This signifies that the individual came to "B" Battery from "C" Battery 271st Brigade, on the date shown in the "service from" column, and that he was transferred to the 54th Divisional Ammunition Column at the conclusion of his service with "B" Battery, as denoted by the date in the "service to" column.

\* Composed the Battery which embarked at Southampton on the 17th November, 1915.

D = Demobilised.

#### OFFICERS.

The ranks shown are those held by officers whilst serving in "B" Battery.

Name.	Service.		Casualties, Honours, &c.
	From	To	
Major C. E. Castellan	{ 28/8/95 1/4/08 -/10/14	31/3/08 -/10/14 26/2/17	—
*Major R. A. Hatton			Killed in action, France, 23/10/18

## ROMFORD TO BEIRUT

Name.	Service.		Casualties, Honours, &c.
	From	To	
Major H. S. Martin	1/3/17	16/4/19	Mentioned in Despatches of Gen. Sir A. J. Murray, K.C.B., &c., C.-i.-C. Egyptian Expeditionary Force, dated 18/3/17. Order of the Nile (4th Class), 9/11/18; A 272/191 Brig.
*Capt. W. J. Harris	{ 27/3/06 1/4/08	31/3/08 31/1/17	-/B.A.C. —
“ W. J. von Pendlebury	-/12/14	-/-15	-/Mountain Brig. R.A.
“ W. G. Trower	4/3/17	17/7/17	-/A 263 Brig.
“ R. W. Brooks	1/7/17	30/11/17	-/C 271
“ F. L. Tibbs	{ 30/1/17 3/7/17	1/3/17 23/8/18	-/34 D.A.C. Military Cross, 14/12/17; Mentioned in Despatches of Gen. Sir. E. H. Allenby, C.-i.-C. Egyptian Expeditionary Force, dated 16/1/18; wounded, 3/11/17, and 28/11/17 —
“ F. S. Ward	19/2/17	3/3/17	Mentioned in Despatches by Gen. Sir E. H. Allenby, C.-i.-C. Egyptian Expeditionary Force, dated 22/1/19
“ E. J. Stansfield	15/12/17	1/3/19	—
Licut. J. W. Radford	15/2/17	1/7/17	-/B 272 Brig.
“ O. B. Clarke	-/4/16	-/-16	Appointed Adjutant —
“ A. W. Matcham	2/12/09	-/-15	Appointed Brigade Medical Officer
“ H. V. Capon	12/12/09	-/11/14	-
* “ R. G. Hill	1/5/09	22/8/16	-/R.A.M.C.; killed in action in France, 11/10/17
* “ D. J. Conoley	5/8/14	-/10/14	-/346 Brig. —
* “ O. F. Conoley	5/8/14	4/7/16	-/B.A.C. —
“ E. C. Pryce	{ 13/3/14 31/1/17	-/-15 1/7/17	-/B 270 Brig. —
“ A. D. Hough	-/7/14	-/-15	-/A 271 Brig.
“ G. Lawrence	26/9/14	-/5/15	-/4 E.A. Brig.
“ G. S. Blake	13/1/16	1/7/17	-/B 270 Brig.
“ A. Wright	2/7/17	D. 29/6/19	—
“ W. T. Fraser	1/7/17	11/8/17	-/R.F.C. —
“ J. Lewis	7/8/17	31/12/17	—
“ A. C. Andrews	8/6/16	14/6/16	-/272 Brig.
“ (act./Capt.) G. M. T. Pretyman	1/6/18	15/8/18	—
“ E. V. Maclean	28/4/19	D. 9/7/19	—
“ R. F. Webb	4/7/17	9/9/17	-/A.O.D. —
“ G. W. Dixon	4/2/18	D. -/2/19	-/B.A.C. —
2/Lieut. H. R. Wardill	21/8/16	30/1/17	-/B.A.C. —
“ A. G. Penfold	28/7/16	30/1/17	-/B.A.C. —
“ D. J. Aitchison	8/5/17	1/7/17	-/B 272 Brig.
“ A. A. Brown	21/12/16	11/7/17	-/34 D.A.C.; -/Adj. 271 Brig.; Military Cross, 3/6/18; died, 4/3/18

Name.	Service.		Casualties, Honours, &c.
	From	To	
2/Lieut. J. Gibbins	8/9/17	3/2/18	-/54 D.A.C.
C. N. Butler	14/12/18	26/4/19	-/191 B.A.C.
" D. H. Hannay	3/9/18	-/6/19	—
" M. H. B. Goody	26/9/14	-/-/15	—

**WARRANT OFFICERS, NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS, GUNNERS  
AND DRIVERS.**

**A**

*Adams, P. J.	3/9/14	D. 24/3/16	—
*Adey, H. G.	30/10/15	D. 21/8/19	—
Aikman, T. S.	20/1/14	3/5/15	-/B 346 Brig.
Alexander, L.	13/4/17	D. 31/8/19	—
Ambrose, G. E.	25/1/16	D. 25/4/19	54 D.A.C./-
Amis, S. E.	7/1/14	-/-/15	-/B 346 Brig.
*Anderson, J. G.	16/9/14	2/3/16	—
*Angell, W. T.	4/7/15	D. 17/7/19	—
Andrews, H. W.	21/12/16	D. 5/5/19	C 271 Brig./-
*Andrews, J. M.	11/9/14	4/9/16	-/A.S.C.
Andrews, W. M.	25/2/13	19/6/15	-/H.Q. 271 Brig.
Ashton, D. T.	21/12/16	26/7/17	C 271 Brig./U.K.
Avery, W.	10/3/16	D. 21/8/19	—
*Axe, E. C.	5/9/11	D. 17/4/19	—

**B**

*Beckshell, C. B.	9/2/09	D. 7/5/19	—
Bailey, C. G.	10/1/11	D. 20/4/19	—
Bailey, J.	19/11/12	? -/-/15	-/B 346 Brig.
*Baillie, H. J.	30/10/15	D. 2/8/19	Wounded, 19/9/18
Baker, H. S.	21/12/16	D. 19/7/19	C 271 Brig./-
Ball, P. W.	4/7/15	? -/-/15	—
Bark, R.	21/12/16	? -/-/15	C 271 Brig./-
Barnes, W. J.	10/8/14	14/5/15	—
*Barrell, W.	13/4/15	2/8/19	—
Barrow, A.	27/1/14	3/5/15	-/B 346 Brig.
Bassett, A.	27/11/15	23/9/18	A 271 Brig./A 271 Brig.
*Battle, L.	17/12/12	D. 17/8/19	—
Bawden, W.	23/2/09	-/-/14	—
Beavis, M. J.	18/8/08	1/7/15	-/154 Brig.
Bedborough, A.	17/7/17	22/7/17	B.A.C./54 D.A.C.
Benton, J. H.	6/8/14	20/2/15	-/H.Q. 271 Brig.
*Bill, E. T.	18/7/11	D. 1/8/19	—
Bird, W.	21/12/16	D. 7/6/19	C 271 Brig./-
*Blackwell, E.	{ 21/1/07	6/4/08	—
	7/4/08	26/11/17	-/19 Brig.
*Bloom, W. J.	8/10/15	29/11/17	—
Bontoft, F. A.	5/3/12	-/-/15	-/B.A.C.
*Booth, J. W.	17/8/14	D. 18/3/19	—
Boughtwood, W. G.	21/12/16	11/7/17	C 271 Brig./54 D.A.C.
	D. 23/4/19		

## ROMFORD TO BEIRUT

Name.	Service.		Casualties, Honours, &c.
	From	To	
Bracey, W.	9/8/14	29/4/15	-/B 346 Brig.
Bradburn, J.	5/8/16	18/4/17	A.V.C.
Brainwood, W.	5/4/17	20/7/17	272 Brig./54 D.A.C.
Bramwell, H.	4/7/17	30/11/17	C 271 Brig./A 263 Brig.
*Bray, F. J.	4/5/15	26/6/16	-/270 Brig.
*Bready, A. E.	16/9/14	D. 28/4/19	—
*Bridge, T.	16/4/12	D. 26/7/19	—
Brighton, W.	13/4/17	D. 14/9/19	—
*Brine, R. J.	14/9/14	D. 2/8/19	—
Brister, W. J.	16/5/15	D. 17/8/19	54 D.A.C./-
Brock, C. N.	7/1/14	3/5/15	-/C 354 Brig.
*Brooks, M. C. C.	14/9/14	D. 5/5/19	—
Browne, C. J.	18/2/13	-/-15	Died, 18/1/19
Broyd, W. E.	21/12/16	D. 3/5/19	C 271 Brig./-
Bryant, C. J.	12/3/16	D. 20/8/19	—
*Bryant, T.	9/5/11	D. 22/4/19	—
Bubb, J.	3/9/14	29/1/15	—
Buck, A. G.	24/5/16	30/1/17	-/B.A.C.
*Buggey, L. F.	-/-14	1/4/18	-/440 Bty.
Bulman, D. M.	16/5/18	6/6/18	54 D.A.C./440 Bty.
Burrows, A.	21/12/16	D. 17/7/19	C 271 Brig./-
Bush, G. H. A.	24/3/16	D. 2/8/19	Wounded, 20/7/16
Byrnes, C. J.	7/4/08	-/12/14	-/B 346 Brig.

## C

*Camp, H. R.	20/4/15	D. 4/8/19	Wounded, 19/9/18
Camp, W. S.	8/8/14	-/-15	-/B 346 Brig.
Carroll, G. F.	24/3/14	23/4/15	—
*Carter, C. F.	{ 5/8/14	22/2/16	R.A.M.C./-
*Carter, E.	{ 23/2/16	D. 19/3/19	—
Cathy, G.	26/8/15	8/3/19	-/H.Q. 271 Brig.
	21/12/16	D. 31/8/19	C 271 Brig./-
		? -/-1	—
Chapman, C.	D. 20/8/19	—	—
Chapman, G. A.	4/2/18	D. 17/7/19	C 271 Brig./-
Chase, P. E.	21/12/16	10/9/18	-/A 346 Brig. H.Q.
Chew, H. H.	5/8/14	-/-15	—
Child, J. W.	? -/9/14	? -/7/15	A.S.C./-
Chitty, W.	10/3/18	D. 9/3/19	Wounded, 19/9/18
Church, L. H.	27/1/18	19/3/18	-/272 Brig.
Clark, A. V.	21/12/16	D. 25/7/19	C 271 Brig./-
Clark, F. R.	24/3/16	22/9/16	—
Clark, H. H.	13/4/17	12/4/18	—
Clark, H. J.	3/2/14	-/-15	-/B 346 Brig.
Clark, L.	6/9/10	5/9/15	—
*Clayden, G.	3/3/14	3/5/15	-/B 346 Brig.
*Clements, A. B.	9/8/14	D. 17/6/19	—
*Coe, J. H.	24/2/14	24/3/19	—
Collins, C. W.	16/9/14	6/5/17	-/33 Railway Coy. R.E.
Constantine, C. W.	21/12/16	D. 27/7/19	C 271 Brig./-
Cook, G. L.	21/5/17	27/6/18	-/54 D.A.C.
Cooper, H. H.	21/12/16	28/2/18	C 271 Brig./-
	17/4/17	? -/1/18	H.Q. 271 Brig./-

## APPENDIX II

185

Name.	Service.		Casualties, Honours, &c.
	From	To	
Cooper, R.	21/9/14	14/2/15	—
Coplin, A. R.	16/6/14	3/5/15	-/B 346 Brig.
*Copsey, A.	19/4/12	D. 21/8/19	—
*Copsey, E. A.	23/9/14	D. 25/7/19	—
*Copsey, E. G.	28/9/14	D. 25/7/19	—
Cotter, W.	18/1/17	D. 21/8/19	H.Q. 271 Brig.-
Coverdale, R.	16/4/12	—/—/15	—
Cox, A.	15/10/15	5/11/15	—
Cox, W.	21/12/16	D. 13/3/19	C 271 Brig.-
*Crawford, J. T. B.	18/9/14	D. 4/5/19	—
Creighton, A.	15/1/18	D. 19/9/19	—
*Croft, H.	30/10/15	D. 4/8/19	C 271 Brig.-
Crosby, A.	21/12/16	26/3/19	C 271 Brig.-
Cruse, W.	16/5/18	D. 3/8/19	54 D.A.C.-
Cunningham, J.	21/12/16	? —/—/	C 271 Brig.-
*Currey, C. H.	15/10/15	D. 20/8/19	—
Cussell, S. J.	1/5/14	—/—/15	-/B 346 Brig.
*Cutler, E. N.	21/7/08	5/12/17	-/No. 4 Section 54 D.A.C.

## D

Dallas, G. W.	5/4/17	D. 4/8/19	B.A.C.-
Daniells, L. C.	21/12/16	D. 30/7/19	C 271 Brig.-
*Davey, H. O.	14/9/14	D. 25/7/19	—
Davis, R.	21/12/16	D. 12/6/19	C 271 Brig.-
Darby, E. F.	23/10/11	? —/—/15	-/44 Res. Brig.
Day, P.	3/5/12	6/10/15	-/48 Prov. Bty.
Debenham, W.	13/4/17	6/5/17	-/53 Railway Coy. R.E.
*Denison, F. C.	4/6/12	D. 10/5/19	—
Dennington, F.	26/8/17	D. 22/5/19	—
Denton, A.	-/10/14	1/1/15	-/Essex R.G.A.
*Dickinson, S. H.	8/8/14	D. 4/5/19	—
Dilkes, C.	27/10/14	? —/—/15	-/B 346 Brig.
Dilkes, H. J.	8/8/14	? —/—/15	-/B 346 Brig.
Dixon, W.	26/7/16	D. 16/7/19	54 Div. Cycle Coy.-
Donovan, G. O.	21/12/16	D. 6/4/19	C 271 Brig.-
*Downer, R.	27/3/15	29/1/19	C 271 Brig.-
Dowsett, F.	21/12/16	D. 17/7/19	C 271 Brig.-
*Dowsing, H. A.	15/10/15	D. 9/8/19	—
Dove, T.	21/12/16	D. 28/4/19	C 271 Brig.-
Draper, A. E.	21/12/16	D. 17/8/19	C 271 Brig.-
Dryne, A.	16/4/12	5/7/15	-/48 Prov. Bty.
*Duke, A. W.	4/3/13	31/12/16	Died in Egypt
*Durrant, G.	15/10/15	2/4/17	-/270 Brig.
		D. 2/8/19	

## E

Eaton, W.	21/12/16	D. 25/7/19	C 271 Brig.-
Edgcumbe, C. E.	21/12/16	D. 23/7/19	C 271 Brig.-
Edridge, A. J.	5/4/17	D. 2/4/19	B.A.C.-
Edwards, A.	3/3/11	1/9/15	—

Name.	Service.		Casualties, Honours, &c.
	From	To	
Edwards, G.	16/6/13	12/5/15	-/H.Q. 271 Brig.
Edwards, H. A.	20/3/10	20/5/15	-/54 D.A.C.
Edwards, W. J.	2/5/18	D. 5/5/19	—
*Elfes, J. A.	15/10/15	D. 4/8/19	—
*Ellingford, A. C.	12/11/12	D. 16/8/19	—
Elliott, W.	1/9/17	30/10/17	-/C 270 Brig.
*Ellis, G.	14/9/14	D. 9/3/19	—
*Elms, R. T.	14/9/14	22/4/17	Awarded Military Cross
Eiston, F.	28/9/14	29/4/15	-/B 346 Brig.
Embleton, F. W. H.	21/12/16	21/3/17	C 271 Brig./ R.E's.
English, A. V.	5/4/17	11/10/17	B.A.C/A 271 Brig.
English, H. T.	23/10/17	24/10/17	-/C 272 Brig.
Everett, G. J.	21/12/16	D. 5/5/19	C 271 Brig./-

## F

Fair, W. J.	21/12/16	D. 7/7/19	C 271 Brig./-
*Farren, J.	3/3/12	D. 17/8/19	—
Fenn, J.	?	D. 12/5/19	—
Fenn, R. R.	2/4/12	? -/-/15	-/B 346 Brig.
Fish, E. C.	3/3/17	D. 17/8/19	A 272 Brig./-
Fisher, H.	12/4/12	29/4/15	-/B 346 Brig.
Flack, P. J. W.	20/12/17	31/12/18	-/A 271 Brig.
Folkard, H. J.	13/2/12	-/-/15	—
Fox, W. A.	13/4/17	D. 7/4/19	—
Frost, G. H.	22/9/14	3/5/15	-/B 346 Brig.
Fuller, M.	21/12/16	D. 17/8/19	C 271 Brig./-

## G

*Gamble, G. A.	27/2/12	D. 29/4/19	—
Gardner, A. J.	1/8/16	D. 2/8/19	—
*Garwood, F. R.	25/4/15	D. 8/8/19	—
*Gear, J.	12/8/14	23/5/16	—
Gibson, F. R.	-/-/15	3/5/15	-/B 346 Brig.
*Gibson, H. E.	16/6/13	31/1/17	-/54 D.A.C.
Glasheen, E.	17/5/18	D. 24/4/19	272 Brig./-
*Gold, A. E.	2/4/12	D. 17/8/19	—
Goodchid, B.	5/4/17	D. 17/8/19	B.A.C/H.Q. 271 Brig./-
Goode, R. J.	1/6/18	15/8/18	37 Brig./-
Goodeve, F. R.	10/3/16	16/6/16	—
Goodfellow, W. C.	7/6/15	-/10/15	-/R.F.C.
	21/12/16	? -/-/	C 271 Brig./-
Gooding, F.	21/8/09	9/6/15	-/B 346 Brig.
Goodrich, E. R.	16/9/14	4/10/15	-/O.T.C.
Goodwin, J.	5/8/14	27/5/15	-/54 D.A.C.
Gould, C.	21/5/17	10/7/17	-/C 272 Brig
Gould, F.	27/1/18	1/4/18	-440 Bty.
Gover, S.	21/12/16	D. 27/3/19	C 271 Brig./-
*Gratton, E. C.	5/10/09	21/12/16	-/54 D.A.C.
*Graves, A. T.	25/2/13	D. 17/8/19	—

Name.	Service.		Casualties, Honours, &c.
	From	To	
Gray, J. B.	21/12/16	12/2/19	C 271 Brig./-
Green, G. A.	11/4/17	10/3/19	H.Q. 271 Brig./-
Greenslade, C. W.	5/4/17	D. 20/4/19	B.A.C./-
Grover, R.	19/4/12	-/-/15	-/B 346 Brig.
Gwynn, W.	21/12/16	D. 2/8/19	C 271 Brig./-
<b>H</b>			
Hall, J. H. C.	12/3/13	15/10/15	-/H.Q. 271 Brig.
Hammond, F.	19/4/12	11/10/15	-/4 T.F. Art. T. Sch.
*Hampshire, G.	15/10/15	10/10/16	-/A 271 Brig.
*Hancock, H. G.	19/4/12	D. 17/7/19	—
*Hancock, W. G.	29/4/12	?/-/16	-/R.F.C.
Hardy, H. C.	16/9/14	3/5/15	-/B 346 Brig.
Hare, A. R.	24/11/08	16/11/15	—
Harley, H.	20/7/17	D. 16/7/19	B.A.C./-
Harman, A.	21/12/16	6/6/18	C 271 Brig./440 Bty.
Harper, A. H.	11/5/17	1/4/18	A 271 Brig./440 Bty.
Harris, G. F.	21/12/16	D. 2/7/19	C 271 Brig./-
Harris, H. W.	1/8/16	1/4/18	-/440 Bty.
*Harris, H. T.	8/4/13	D. 17/8/19	—
Harris, V.	21/12/16	D. 25/7/19	C 271 Brig./-
*Hartwell, L. C. A.	29/5/13	25/1/16	-/A 271 Brig.
*Hawkins, J. T.	2/4/12	1/4/18	-/440 Bty.
Hawkins, W. T.	21/12/16	D. 21/7/19	C 271 Brig./-
Hawkins, R.	21/12/16	D. 17/8/19	C 271 Brig./-
*Hearn, S. F.	10/8/14	D. 17/7/19	—
Heath, W. H.	13/12/17	D. 7/4/19	—
Heaven, H. A.	18/9/14	3/5/15	-/B 346 Brig.
Henry, J. M.	15/4/18	D. 28/2/19	—
Hewitt, J.	21/7/17	D. 19/4/19	54 D.A.C./-
Hickmott, H.	19/4/12	5/7/15	-/48 Prov. Bty.
*Hilditch, W.	8/8/14	D. 1/8/19	—
Hill, J. I.	12/5/14	27/7/15	-/R.E's.
Hilton, J.	6/2/12	?/-/15	-/C 354 Brig.
Hinchcliffe, G.	21/4/14	-/-/15	-/B 346 Brig.
*Hitch, J. R.	12/4/12	D. 17/8/19	—
Hitch, W.	17/10/10	16/10/15	—
*Hoefner, A. H.	11/8/14	D. 18/7/19	—
Hole, A. B. B.	21/12/16	D. 17/8/19	C 271 Brig./-
Hole, W. T.	21/12/16	D. 29/3/19	C 271 Brig./-
Holman, B.	30/4/16	17/1/19	A 271 Brig./-
Hooper, C. V.	25/9/14	3/5/15	-/B 346 Brig.
*Horide, H. T.	26/3/12	D. 7/7/19	—
*Horton, R.	7/8/14	28/3/18	-/54 D.A.C.
Houser, R.	24/3/16	17/8/17	-/270 Brig.
Houghton, E. C.	28/11/17	30/8/18	A 271 Brig./-; Mentioned in Despatches by Gen. Sir E. E. H. Allenby, C.-i.-C. Egyptian Expeditionary Force, dated 22/1/19
Howgill, J. W.	27/11/15	D. 20/4/19	

## ROMFORD TO BEIRUT

Name.	Service.		Casualties, Honours, &c.
	From	To	
*Humphris, R. W.	5/11/12	D. 16/8/19	
Hunt, F.	15/4/18	6/6/18	R.A.M.C./440 Bty.
Hunt, H. C.	10/3/17	8/8/17	C 270 Brig./Mountain Art. Brig.
Hunt, P. W.	21/12/16	D. 16/7/19	C 271 Brig./-
Hunt, W. H.	21/12/16	D. 7/8/19	C 271 Brig./-

## I

*Isbell, A. H.	18/6/12	D. 17/8/19	—
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## J

Jaggard, A. H. V.	21/12/16	D. 2/7/19	C 271 Brig./-
*Jarrett, C. J.	8/8/14	25/1/17	—
*Jewell, J. T.	27/3/14	15/11/18	Died at sea
*Johnson, E.	7/6/15	D. 16/7/19	A 346 Brig./-
Johnson, F. S.	30/8/10	?/-/15	-/B 346 Brig.
Johnson, G. E.	21/12/16	?/-/—	C 271 Brig./-
Jolly, C. A.	1/8/16	D. 17/3/19	
*Jones, G. R.	11/9/14	25/10/18	-/R.G.A.
*Jones, R. T. S.	15/10/15	D. 25/7/19	—
*Jory, J. H. F.	1/11/13	D. 4/8/19	—
Jump, J. G.	18/2/18	D. 7/7/19	Wounded, 20/7/16
		D. 18/7/19	H.Q.R.A. 54 Divn./-

## K

*Keir, A. J.	12/8/14	D. 17/7/19	
Kettel, A. H.	21/12/16	D. 31/8/19	C 271 Brig./-
Knights, J. B.	11/10/17	12/10/17	-/C 272 Brig.

## L

Lawrence, A. E.	21/12/16	D. 21/3/17	C 271 Brig./R.E's.
Lawrence, G. T.	2/5/18	D. 17/8/19	—
Lawrence, G. H.	17/2/13	5/11/15	-/H.Q. 271 Brig.
Laws, E.	26/6/16	25/1/18	A.V.C.
Ledru, S. E.	5/11/12	?/-/15	-/B 346 Brig.
Lee, R. W.	21/12/16	D. 28/4/19	C 271 Brig./-
*Leith, H. A.	26/4/12	D. 17/8/19	—
*Levett, F. C.	1/4/13	D. 16/7/19	—
Levett, W.	26/8/17	D. 28/4/19	—
Lewis, J.	1/8/16	17/8/17	-/54 D.A.C.
*Linsell, B. C.	18/8/08	23/12/15	-/534 (How.) Bty.
Linsell, W.	5/5/08	3/5/15	-/B 346 Brig.
*Little, C. C. A.	4/10/10	15/10/15	-/C 271 Brig.
Little, R. J.	25/1/16	D. 7/4/19	54 D.A.C./-
*Lone, N. C.	6/8/14	3/9/16	-/O.T.C.

Name.	Service.		Casualties, Honours, &c.
	From	To	
Loughlin, W.	21/7/17	D. 25/7/19	54 D.A.C./-
*Loveday, J. J.	15/10/15	D. 5/5/19	—
Lovett, G. A.	13/4/17	29/12/18	Died in Egypt
*Lucas, A. S.	21/11/11	D. 16/7/19	—
Lucas, S.	4/1/18	D. 20/4/19	—

**M**

Major, W. R.	10/9/14	3/5/15	-/B 346 Brig.
Maloney, V.	10/9/14	-/-/15	-/B 346 Brig.
Malt, R. J.	21/5/17	D. 5/5/19	—
Martin, A. S.	2/4/12	-/-/15	-/B 346 Brig.
Maryon, R.	4/8/14	3/5/15	-/B 346 Brig.
*Mason, M. A.	3/5/15	D. 5/5/19	C 271 Brig./-
*Matthew, R. H.	15/9/14	D. 27/5/19	—
Maunders, E.	25/1/16	21/12/16	54 D.A.C./54 D.A.C.
*Maylin, S. F.	25/2/13	D. 24/7/19	Wounded, 19/9/18
McCheasney, J.	16/5/18	D. 27/2/19	54 D.A.C./54 D.A.C.
McInnes, J.	1/9/17	6/6/18	-/440 Bty.
*Meakin, C. C.	14/9/14	D. 22/5/19	—
*Mettam, W. M.	8/8/14	6/5/17	-/Essex Fortress R.E.
*Millar, W.	25/6/12	D. 17/8/19	—
Miller, R. E.	5/11/12	19/6/15	-/H.Q. 271 Brig.; died in Syria, 6/11/18
Mills, C. J.	21/12/16	D. 21/3/19	C 271 Brig./-
Milton, F.	19/11/12	3/5/15	-/B 346 Brig.
Minns, A. W.	21/12/16	5/3/18	C 271 Brig./R.E.'s
*Mitchell, L. G.	{ 8/8/14 21/2/18	2/4/17 D. 28/4/19	-/270 Brig./-
Moore, A. T.	19/2/17	3/3/17	54 D.A.C./54 D.A. Depot
*Moore, D. F.	21/3/11	D. 7/7/19	—
*Morgan, H. V.	23/1/12	D. 16/7/19	—
*Morgan, P.	19/3/12	D. 17/8/19	—
Morley, G. F.	3/3/17	D. 6/6/19	A 272 Brig./-; wounded, 28/11/17
Mortlock, G. W.	23/9/14	3/5/15	-/B 346 Brig.
Munday, J.	30/1/17	7/9/18	B.A.C./54 D.A.C.

**N**

Newman, S.	14/9/14	3/5/15	-/B 346 Brig.
Nicholls, A.	21/12/16	D. 25/7/19	C 271 Brig./-
*Nicholson, H. T.	14/5/12	D. 3/5/19	—
*Noad, H.	22/9/14	D. 25/7/19	—
Nutting, F. W.	13/12/17	27/12/17	-/A 270 Brig.

**O**

Ocks, F. C.	14/9/14	-/-/15	-/Middlesex Regt.
O'Connor, A.	21/12/16	-/12/16	C 271 Brig./-
Oliver, A. G.	30/4/16	3/9/16	—
Oliver, W. T.	21/12/16	11/7/17	C 271 Brig./54 D.A.C.
Overall, H.	21/12/16	D. 20/8/19	C 271 Brig./-
		D. 21/8/19	C 271 Brig./-

## ROMFORD TO BEIRUT

Name.	Service.		Casualties, Honours, &c.
	From	To	

## P

*Page, J.	23/9/14	D. 25/7/19	
Palmer, A.	21/12/16	D. 7/4/19	C 271 Brig./-
Palmer, W.	14/5/12	?/-/15	-/B 346 Brig.
*Parker, C. W.	29/4/12	D. 20/4/19	—
*Parker, E.	11/6/12	D. 9/5/19	—
*Parker, E. H.	3/5/15	D. 29/3/19	C 271 Brig./-
*Parker, G. W. H.	11/8/14	D. 7/4/19	—
Parker, L.	24/2/14	?/-/15	-/B 346 Brig.
*Patience, W.	9/2/09	D. 10/4/19	—
*Payton, B. G.	7/5/13	D. 9/5/19	Wounded, 19/9/18
*Pearce, H. A.	21/9/14	D. 12/8/19	—
Phillips, T. C.	21/12/16	D. 25/7/19	C 271 Brig./-
*Philp, L. J.	3/5/15	1/4/18	C 271 Brig./440 Bty.
*Pickering, T. H.	24/5/15	1/4/18	H.Q. 271 Brig./440 Bty.
*Pickering, W. J. E.	24/5/15	D. 2/8/19	H.Q. 271 Brig./440 Bty.
*Pidgeon, C. B.	12/11/12	D. 2/8/19	—
Pink, P.	14/9/14	D. 9/3/19	-/B 346 Brig.
*Plowright, F. W.	23/4/12	D. 16/7/19	—
Plumpton, J.	5/10/17	D. 20/4/19	—
Poe, C. H. L.	14/12/18	D. 1/4/19	A 271 Brig./-
Pope, G.	4/7/17	D. 25/7/19	B.A.C./-
*Pope, R.	17/2/14	D. 16/7/19	—
Poulton, E. J.	1/10/14	3/5/15	-/B 346 Brig.
Powell, H.	13/12/17	28/2/18	-/54 D.A.C.
Prior, V.	12/4/12	5/7/15	-/48 Prov. Bty.
Pryke, R.	23/9/14	3/5/15	-/B 346 Brig.

## Q

Quin, F. J.	18/6/12	29/4/15	-/B 346 Brig.
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## R

Randall, G.	13/4/17	D. 6/5/17	
Rayner, A. J.	21/12/16	D. 20/8/19	C 271 Brig./-
Reavell, F. A.	21/12/16	D. 3/8/19	C 271 Brig./-
Redmill, R. J.	21/12/16	D. 17/7/19	C 271 Brig./-; Mentioned in Despatches by Gen. Sir E. E. H. Allenby, C.-i.-C. Egyptian Expeditionary Force, dated 22/1/19
Rice, A. F.	21/9/14	-/-15	-/B 346 Brig.
Rice, S. G.	5/11/12	3/5/15	-/B 346 Brig.; died in France, 23/8/18
*Rich, W.	16/4/12	D. 17/8/19	—
*Richardson, R. R.	15/11/10	D. 23/3/19	—
Richardson, W.	23/9/14	3/5/15	-/B 346 Brig.
Ridgewell, G.	21/5/17	D. 21/8/19	—

## APPENDIX II

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Name.	Service.		Casualties, Honours, &c.
	From	To	
Ripley, C.	16/9/14	14/7/15	-/B.A.C.
*Roe, J. A.	15/10/15	D. 2/8/19	—
*Roberts, L.	16/4/12	7/5/16	—
*Robinson, H. G.	12/4/12	D. 17/8/19	Distinguished Conduct Medal, 14/12/17
Robinson, R. F.	5/10/14	3/5/15	-/B 346 Brig.
Rogers, A.	5/5/14	3/5/15	-/B 346 Brig.
*Rogers, A. A.	15/9/14	20/9/18	Died of wounds received in action
*Rolph, J. C. J.	31/3/14	19/6/15	Accidentally killed, 3/6/17
Rood, T.	21/12/16	D. ?	-/H.Q. 271 Brig.
Rosenberger, B.	17/9/14	29/1/15	C 271 Brig./-
Rudkin, N. J.	7/4/14	-/-/15	—
Ruffle, P. G.	6/8/14	-/10/15	-/B 346 Brig.
*Rushan, S. A.	5/11/12	D. 28/4/19	Wounded, 19/9/18

## 8

Sach, A.	21/12/16	1/4/18	C 271 Brig./440 Bty.
Secret, F.	11/11/13	-/-/15	-/B 346 Brig.
Saddler, T. J.	17/5/18	D. 5/5/19	272 Brig./-
Saich, F.	24/2/14	-/-/15	-/B 346 Brig.
Saunders, F. G.	5/8/14	-/-/15	—
*Savill, P. G.	7/8/14	7/1/16	-/B.A.C.
Schutz, E. J.	5/4/17	D. 25/7/19	B.A.C./-
Searley, F. J.	5/10/14	-/-/15	-/B 346 Brig.
Sheffield, J. C.	4/12/11	7/10/15	-/B.A.C.
Shipton, J. E.	21/12/16	? -/-/15	C 271 Brig./-
Short, J. A.	12/9/14	3/5/15	-/B 346 Brig.
Sillett, R. H.	23/10/17	15/3/19	—
*Simmons, H. P.	14/9/14	D. 23/3/19	—
Slowley, J. C.	21/12/16	D. 2/7/19	C. 271 Brig./-
Smart, J.	6/5/14	-/-/15	-/B 346 Brig.
Smith, A. S.	13/4/17	17/1/19	—
*Smith, H. E.	3/9/14	D. 25/7/19	C 271 Brig./-
*Smith, S. A. T.	3/5/15	D. 25/7/19	-/1/1 Herts Bty.
Smith, T. H.	17/9/14	11/6/15	54 D.A.C./-
Smith, W. J.	14/9/18	D. 17/7/19	-/B 346 Brig.
Southworth, E. C.	18/9/14	-/-/15	C 271 Brig./-
Spencer, F.	21/12/16	D. 23/4/19	—
*Spencer, F. H. (880676)	21/9/14	D. 25/7/19	—
*Spencer, F. H. (880197)	19/11/12	D. 11/4/19	—
Spencer, H. V.	-/8/14	4/5/15	—
Stebbing, S.	12/4/12	15/10/15	Died in Egypt, 5/10/16
*Steidleu, J. W. H.	30/10/15	13/3/16	-/C 271 Brig.
*Stemp, G.	29/4/15	D. 17/8/19	—
Steward, P.	30/4/16	6/5/16	A 271 Brig./A 271 Brig.
*Stone, R. V.	27/3/14	D. 16/8/19	Military Medal, 30/7/17
*Straight, E. W.	11/6/12	D. 1/10/19	—
*Striker, A. W.	25/9/14	17/10/17	—
Stubbings, G.	24/9/14	-/10/15	—
*Swain, J. E.	13/2/12	D. 17/7/19	—

## ROMFORD TO BEIRUT

Name.	Service.		Casualties, Honours, &c.
	From	To	

## T

*Tangstram, G. H.	29/9/14	D. 25/7/19	—
Tatham, C. S.	8/8/14	26/1/15	—
Taylor, F. C.	21/12/16	D. 17/7/19	C 271 Brig./—
Taylor, W. E.	21/12/16	? —/—/17	C 271 Brig./54 D.A.C.
Taylor, W. G.	1/4/15	D. 19/5/19	—/54 D.A.C.
*Templeman, H.	15/10/15	20/5/15	—
Thame, E. W.	30/1/17	D. 2/8/19	B.A.C./B 270 Brig.
Tibbenham, C.	21/7/17	1/7/17	54 D.A.C./—
Titterton, F. A.	21/12/16	D. 29/4/19	C 271 Brig./—
Todd, C. D.	12/5/14	D. 17/8/19	—/B 346 Brig.
*Tompkins, T. V.	3/5/15	—/—/15	—/440 Bty.
*Tooley, E. W.	8/8/14	D. 1/4/18	—
Trangmar, E.	21/12/16	D. 17/7/19	C 271 Brig./—
Trevillion, J. C.	21/12/16	D. 17/7/19	C 271 Brig./—
Tunwell, A. T.	10/9/14	3/5/15	—/B 346 Brig.
Turnbull, H. A.	21/12/16	? —/—/17	C 271 Brig./—
*Turner, E.	26/4/12	D. 25/7/19	—
Turner, J.	17/2/14	D. 15/8/19	—/B 346 Brig.
*Turner, P. A.	24/8/14	3/5/15	B.A.C./—
Turnidge, A. J.	25/6/16	D. 27/7/19	—
Thwaites, E. R.	21/12/16	D. 28/7/19	C 271 Brig./— ; Mentioned in Despatches by Gen. Sir E. E. H. Allenby, C.-i.-C. Egyptian Expeditionary Force, dated 5/6/19
Tyree, H. G.	2/8/18	D. 8/9/19	—

## V

Vear, W. G.	21/12/16	D. 5/5/19	C 271 Brig./—
Vernall, A. N.	21/12/16	D. 20/4/19	C 271 Brig./—
*Viney, E. E.	19/1/09	D. 5/5/19	—

## W

*Wainwright, J.	26/9/14	D. 20/4/19	—
*Wake, H. V.	26/4/12	D. 9/3/19	—
Wakefield, H.	21/12/16	D. 2/3/19	C 271 Brig./—
Wallace, A. J.	26/8/14	29/4/15	—/B 346 Brig.
Wallis, W.	22/5/15	?	—
Wallis, W. H.	5/10/10	4/10/15	—
Waples, R. G.	1/1/17	? —/—/—	A 271 Brig./—
Ward, C. F.	25/5/09	D. 3/7/19	—
Warhurst, J.	30/4/12	10/11/15	—
*Warren, F.	23/3/09	13/10/15	—/B 346 Brig.
*Warren, W. J.	7/8/14	D. 7/7/19	—
		20/7/16	Wounded in Egypt, 20/7/16

Name.	Service.		Casualties, Honours, &c.
	From	To	
Warwick, L. S.	21/12/16	D. 5/5/19	C 271 Brig./-
*Waters, B. G.	4/6/15	D. 21/8/19	H.Q. 271 Brig./54 D.A.C.
Watkins, G. H.	{ 11/5/17	21/5/17	A 271 Brig./C 271 Brig.
	26/2/18	19/3/18	-/272 Brig.
Watling, W. J.	8/8/14	-/-15	-/B 346 Brig.
*Watson, T. W.	16/4/12	1/4/18	-/440 Bty.
*Watts, D. L.	16/4/12	29/8/17	-/R.E.'s.
Weatherhead, F. G.	14/9/14	3/5/15	-/B 346 Brig.
Webb, A.	21/12/16	D. 17/8/19	C 271 Brig./-
*Webb, J.	? -/-14	D. 22/7/19	Wounded in Egypt, 20/7/16
*Weller, A. G.	9/8/14	D. 20/4/19	-
*Wells, E. G.	11/4/11	16/7/19	-
*Wells, W.	19/2/13	D. 17/8/19	-
*Wenman, H. S.	3/5/15	D. 25/7/19	C 271 Brig./-
West, W. H.	3/7/18	D. 25/7/19	54 D.A.C./-
*Westwood, E.	21/4/14	D. 24/7/19	-
Whitam, T.	8/4/13	23/8/14	-
Whitchelo, G. W. J.	7/1/16	25/6/19	B.A.C./- ; died in Italy
Whiting, W. W.	5/4/17	25/5/17	B.A.C./C 271 Brig.
Whitworth, J.	26/8/17	13/11/18	-/2 Res. Brig.
Wilkins, A. W.	24/1/16	-/-19	2-1 E.A.D.A.C./-
*Wilkinson, R. H.	23/6/13	D. 17/8/19	-
Willatts, W. J.	20/12/16	? -/-1 }	-
Williams, G. A.	21/12/16	D. 17/8/19	C 271 Brig./-
Willis, J. R.	23/6/17	D. 27/7/19	-
Williscroft, G.	23/4/12	-/-15	-/B 346 Brig.
Wilson, H. J.	26/6/16	1/7/17	-/B 272 Brig.
Wilson, P. W.	16/4/12	-/-15	-/B 346 Brig.
Winn, E. T.	2/5/18	6/6/18	H.Q. 271 Brig./440 Bty.
Woods, H. J.	21/5/17	D. 31/8/19	-
Woods, W.	1/4/08	11/10/15	-/ No. 4 T.F. Art. T. Sch.
Woolmer, H. V.	21/7/17	18/2/18	54 D.A.C./A 271 Brig.
*Wright, J.	24/5/15	11/5/17	H.Q. 271 Brig./H.Q. 271 Brig.
Wright, T.	19/2/17	? 3/3/17	-

## Y

\*York, G. S.

| 23/4/12 | D. 3/5/19 |









